

EXAMINATION.

PERHAPS it would be impossible to point out, upon the face of the whole earth, a country which unites in itself more of those circumstances which constitute human happiness than *Nova-Scotia*. It has received from Providence a healthy, invigorating climate; equally removed from the torpid severity of higher latitudes, and the pestilential atmospheres of the south;—a soil, in many parts, exuberantly fertile; in all, producing in abundance, every article of useful consumption;—a situation admirably adapted to commerce, innumerable harbours, and a fishery capable of supplying the whole world. Neither are these natural advantages counteracted by any moral evils, either religious or political. It enjoys a free constitution, whilst, at the same time, it receives the protection of a mighty empire, of which it forms a constituent part without sharing its burthens.—Instead of paying the fleets

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and armies, by which it is defended, they are a source of considerable wealth to the community; the executive government is another channel through which it derives a revenue, and the trade of the colony is vivified by the capitals of the mother country.—In religion it is equally happy. The Church of England, which is the religion of the British Government, and of an immense majority of British subjects, is the Church by law established, by the free consent of the Province, expressed in the act of its legislature, in its first general assembly *. And every other persuasion is allowed free liberty of conscience, and the uninterrupted exercise of public worship, according to their several opinions.

This excellent system of toleration was admirably seconded by the liberality of mind, and the good sense of the inhabitants. The most perfect harmony prevailed among the members of the different congregations. No man condemned, or thought ill of his neighbour for his religious opinions. The golden age of the Prophet seemed to be realized; the wolf dwelt in concord with the lamb, and the leopard lay down in friendly society with the kid.

Every attempt to disturb this universal tranquillity, to sow the seeds of discord, to dissolve the bonds of charity, and to set man against his fellow for a mere difference of sentiment in religious matters, deserves the execration of

* Perpetual Acts of the General Assembly of Nova-Scotia, 3 George 2d, chap. v. 1758.

every one who boasts of the name of a Christian. Since such is the imperfect state of human nature, so various the impressions produced by the same object upon different minds, that scarcely two men are of the same way of thinking upon even the most common topics of life, how is it to be expected of the more important? Divisions must prevail as long as man is man. All that human wisdom can do is to render them harmless.

Very different is the tendency of a *Letter of Instructions to the Catholic Missionaries*, lately printed, and circulated, with great industry, throughout this Province. The professed objects of this Letter are extremely laudable; to enforce obedience to the higher powers, to teach the lawfulness of the oath of allegiance, to warn people against the emissaries of discord, and to shew them the wickedness of oaths taken in support of illegal combinations. But, unfortunately, these subjects occupy the smallest space of this publication—the greater part of it is filled with doctrines of a very adverse complexion; with plausible misrepresentations of the tenets of the Romish Church, and a revival of its haughty pretensions; with virulent invectives against all Protestant ministers of every denomination, and with democratical principles, supported by assumptions unfounded in truth.

This Letter was totally without just cause, or provocation. The Catholics were in the quiet possession, and the undisturbed enjoyment

ment of their rites, and their prejudices. No previous discussion had attacked their principles, or irritated their feelings. The *Bishop of Nova-Scotia's* Charge was not printed till the last sheet of Mr. *Burke's* book was in the press. With respect to the Postscript, which was written in answer to the Charge, in which he treats a respectable Prelate of the established Church with very indecent and improper language;—I shall leave it to the general opinion; and I believe there is but one upon the subject. The common sense of mankind has long since decided, that scurrility is the strongest proof of the weakness of a cause, and that it demonstrates nothing but the illiberality, and the malevolence, of the person, who descends so low as to employ it.

If there is any evil in these Instructions it is likely to become very extensive, for no less than a thousand copies have been printed, and distributed. And they have been ushered into the world by a person who calls himself, by what authority I know not, the *Vicar-General*, and under the pretended sanction of the Catholic *Bishop of Quebec*. Should any well-meaning people have been misled by outward appearances, it is the more necessary that they should be undeceived, and the real drift of the Letter pointed out to them. Under such circumstances, silence would be a desertion of duty.

I propose to consider Mr. *Burke's* Letter under three points of view.—*First*, His observations

vations upon the Oath of Allegiance.—*Secondly*, His Principles of Temporal Authority,—and, *Thirdly*, His Opinions respecting Spiritual Authority.

I.

Mr. *Burke* discusses minutely the Oath of Allegiance which the Legislature requires of Catholics, and shews clearly that they may take it with perfect safety of conscience. This is very right, and the only wonder is that it should ever have been the subject of doubt. In its effects, it is a mere question of fact, arising from the first principles of the social compact. When a lawful government is formed, it is entitled to the obedience of all persons who live within its limits, because such obedience is what constitutes the very nature of a political union; and every government may require of any such person to declare, under the solemnity of an oath, that he is willing to submit to it; and to renounce obedience to every other power. Whoever refuses this test, be his reason for the refusal what it may, whether it be disaffection, religious scruples, or any thing else, he is no longer to be considered as a member of that society, or entitled to any of its privileges. If his objections arise from religion, the only thing which his duty can point out to him, is to quit the country, and find another more suitable to his principles. For every man's conscience must tell him, that it is wrong to claim the benefit of a contract, without performing the conditions; to

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enjoy the advantages of a society without performing the duties which its laws exact.

But though he agrees generally to the propriety of this oath, he finds great fault with most of the clauses in it ; which he says, " are " mortifying to the Catholics, by obliging them " to disclaim certain opinions, there specified, " which their ancestors are supposed to have " entertained, and which supposition is false " and groundless." For these " calumnious " misrepresentations" he assigns a reason, " that the legislature was composed of men " who knew Catholics only by vague report ; " and saw their principles disfigured in flying " sheets and pamphlets ; or as they were " painted in times of general commotion, and " great irritation, by men interested in sup- " pressing Catholicity through political views ; " or from the aspersions of some clergymen, " who had abjured the Catholic communion."

Whether the laws against Papists were of too sanguinary a nature, I shall not enquire, but I believe our ancestors, who introduced those clauses into the oath, had good reason for that precaution ; and were certainly full as well acquainted with the Catholic religion as we can be. They had seen it in every possible situation. Till the reign of *Henry the VIII.* it was the established church. At the reformation it was in a militant state, and in the disputations which took place, the minutest articles were thoroughly examined, discussed, and probed to the bottom. In *Queen Mary's* time,

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time, they had seen it triumphant, and persecuting; and, during the following century, restless and plotting. At the Revolution, when the oaths of allegiance and supremacy were settled nearly in their present form, as prescribed by the legislature of this province, they were still smarting under the tyranny of Popery, again victorious, and again trampling upon every obligation, human and divine. What inferences were to be drawn from them, or whether the means to counteract them were prudent, or just, is another question; but no man can doubt but that the principles, and doctrines, of the Romish Church were most perfectly and accurately known.

That the Catholics now renounce these doctrines I am happy to find. But when they make this avowal, would it not have been full as judicious, not to have denied, in so unqualified a manner, that they had ever believed them? Because if this can be proved to be an untrue assertion, does it not very much weaken their credit upon other points, and render even their sincerity very liable to be distrusted? —It is worth while, therefore, to ascertain whether they ever held such doctrines, or not, if for no other reasons, yet, since Mr. *Burke* has maintained the negative, *his veracity*, at least, is implicated in the question.

The doctrines adverted to are these:—
That if the sovereign of a country happens to be a protestant, or as they call him a heretic, no Catholics are bound to obey him, and that they

they may even depose, or murder him; especially if he has been excommunicated by the Pope. That, in their opinion, so imprescriptible is this sacred right of insurrection, that no oaths, or compacts can supercede it. That all heretics that is protestants, may be murdered and destroyed; and that no faith is to be kept with them. And, lastly, that the Romish Church can dispense with oaths, and absolve its members from any declarations to the contrary.

Such are the opinions which the oath of allegiance imputes to the Catholics—and indeed it is impossible to conceive maxims more diabolical. They strike at the very root of all civil society. Is it possible that they can be the doctrines of Christianity? of that mild and amiable religion, whose first precept is universal love and charity, forgiveness of enemies, and submission to injuries? of the meek and benevolent Jesus, who refused to call down fire from heaven upon those who opposed his gospel and insulted God himself in his person? yet they *were* incontestibly the doctrines of the Romish Church.

This position I shall prove not from “lying pamphlets, the productions of ignorance, “malevolence, and fanatical phrenzy,” but by an authority, which Mr. *Burke* himself will scarcely be inclined to dispute, that of the *Pope himself*. From the canon law, a code which was compiled from the decrees of councils, the opinions of the fathers, and the decretal epistles

tles and bulles of the Holy See; and was published and declared to be authentic under the auspices of different Popes.

With respect to the obedience due to protestant or heretical sovereigns;—Pope *Gregory* the Ninth issued a decree in which he says,—We hereby absolve from every obligation of allegiance, homage, and every other duty, all those who are bound to manifest heretics by any compact or promise whatsoever; in whatever manner it may be confirmed *, that is, even if an oath of allegiance be taken to confirm it.

In the year 1558, consequently above a century after the Council of Constance, by which, Mr. *Burke* says, such doctrines were condemned. Pope Paul the Fourth, in a law which he declares to be of perpetual duration, by the fullness of his apostolical power, and confirming all former decrees against heretics, enacts that all and singular Earls, Barons, Marquissès, Dukes, Kings, and Emperors, who shall have fallen into, or shall hereafter fall into heresy, shall, moreover, by such crime alone, without the intervention of law or farther act, be entirely, totally, and for ever, deprived of their Earldoms, Baronies, Marquissates, Duchies, Kingdoms, and Empires; and shall be

I shall produce here the extracts above quoted, in the original language, which is Latin, that they who understand that tongue may vouch for the fidelity of the translation.

* Decretal. Greg. Lib. V. Tit. 7. cap. 16. Absolutos se noverint à debito fidelitatis, hominibus, et totius obsequii quicumque lapsis manifeste in hæresim aliquo pacto quacunque firmitate vallata tenebantur attriti.

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held unfit, and incapable of holding the same*.

All heretics or protestants were excommunicated by one general decree of Pope *Innocent* the Third.

We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy against the holy, orthodox, and catholic faith. Condemning all heretics under whatever names they may be distinguished, and who indeed, though they have different faces, have their tails all tied together, since they agree in vanity †.

Many other passages might be adduced to the same effect; besides innumerable quotations from Popish writers of great eminence, by whom the doctrine is asserted and defended. Nor has it been a mere speculative principle confined to books; history affords many well known examples of the deposition of royal heretics, which are celebrated with exultation by the Romish Church. Mr. *Burke* says, that “ in the great persecutions of *Nero*, “ and even of *Julian* the apostate, if no resist-

* Sept: Decretal. Lib. V. Tit. 3. Cap. 9. Hac nostra in perpetuum valitura constitutione; de apostolica potestatis plenitudine sancimus: quod sententiis, censuris, et pœnis predictis in suis robore et efficacia remanentibus, omnes et singuli.---Comites, Barones, Marchiones, Duces, Reges, et Imperatores, qui hæcenus deviasse, aut in hæresim incidisse deprehensi fuerint, aut in posterum deviabunt, aut in hæresim incident, sint etiam eo ipso absque aliquo juris aut facti ministerio, Comitibus, Baronibus, Marchionatibus, Ducatibus, Regnis, et Imperio, penitus, et in totum, perpetuo privati, et ad illa de cætero inhabiles et incapaces habeantur.

† Decret. Greg. Lib. V. Tit. 7. Cap. 13. Excommunicamus itaque et anathematizamus omnem hæresim extollemem se adversus hanc sanctam, orthodoxam, et catholicam fidem, quam superius exposuimus.---Condemnantes hæreticos universos, quibuscunque nominibus censeantur, facies quidem diversas habentes, sed caudas ad invicem colligatas, quia de vanitate conveniunt in idipsum.

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"ance was made by that incalculable number
 "of Christians who were sacrificed to the fury
 "of those tyrants, it was not for want of
 "power or means." Cardinal *Bellarmino*,
 one of the most splendid luminaries of that
 communion, entertains an opinion directly con-
 trary. "If the Christians did not depose *Nero*,
 "or *Julian*, it was only for want of temporal
 "power*." Who shall decide when Doctors
 disagree?

These doctrines were more distinctly and
 expressly declared by the council of Trent,
 which settled finally the Roman Faith, and to
 which the oath of allegiance most particularly
 refers. I have not the canons of that council
 to produce, but I believe what I have already
 stated is sufficient to convince the reader that
 it was not through calumny, or ignorance, that
 the Papists were charged with maintaining
 that Princes might be deposed or murdered by
 the authority of the See of Rome. How far
 the decrees of the Popes are binding upon Ro-
 man Catholics, may be seen in the words of
 the Creed of *Pius* the Fourth, which is the
 standard of their religion, and contains the
 faith which is professed by every person who
 embraces it. "I do promise and swear true
 "obedience to the Bishop of Rome."

The next assertions which I shall consider
 are these, "The position that 'tis lawful to
 "murder or destroy heretics is no part of the

* Quod si Christiani olim non deposuerunt Neronem, aut Julianum,
 id fuit, quia deerant vires temporales Christianis. Bellarm. de Rom.
 Pontif. C. v. c. 7.

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“ Catholic doctrine ; and the invectives against
 “ the Council of Constance, as if it had put
 “ *John Hus*, and *Jerome* of Prague to death
 “ *for heresy*, are idle tales.” One is really at a
 loss which most to admire, the representations
 in point of doctrine or of history. Is there any
 fact better known or attested, than that the
 Romish Church in all ages, when it had the
 power, has never ceased to persecute heretics ?
 Is mankind in its dotage, and has lost all me-
 mory of past events, that such fictions are to
 be imposed upon it ? Is the inquisition totally
 unknown which was instituted whenever the
 Church had influence enough, and which the
 Pope endeavoured to establish in every country
 in Europe, so late as the sixteenth century, for
 the very purpose of imprisoning, torturing, and
 destroying heretics ? Have we so soon forgot
Cranmer, *Ridley*, and *Latimer*, and those other
 Protestant martyrs who were the victims of
 Popery in the short reign of *Queen Mary* ?

The most slender acquaintance with history
 is sufficient to confute those misrepresentations
 respecting *John Hus*, the celebrated champion
 of Protestantism. Nor is it difficult to see the
 reasons for this vehemence against him. That
Hus declaimed, as many other eminent men
 of that time did, against the vices of the Ro-
 mish Clergy, and endeavoured to withdraw
 his country from blind submission to the Papal
 power, that he met with great opposition from
 the Romish ecclesiastics, and that great distur-
 bances were occasioned by their violence, is
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certain; but I am yet to learn that *Hufs* was guilty of sedition, or that he denied, as Mr. *Burke* informs us, the authority of the civil magistrate. On the other hand it is related that he had obtained extraordinary credit at the court of his sovereign, and had interest with him sufficient to procure an edict in his favour, respecting some points in dispute with other divines. A joke of the King of Bohemia, shews, at least, that he was not in ill humour with the reformer.—*Hufs*, it seems, had been obliged to follow the example of his adversaries, in furthering his suit by repeated presents, as was usual in those days. Upon one of these occasions the King is reported to have said with a laugh, that he had got a good goose (*Hufs* in their language signifies a goose) which laid every day golden and silver eggs.

As to the crime, real or supposed, for which *Hufs* suffered, historians inform us, that by the artifices and bribes of his enemies the Romish Clergy, he was declared an heretic by the Council of Constance, composed of ecclesiastics, because he refused to obey their order, which commanded him to plead guilty of heresy, against the dictates of his own conscience; and for heresy, by a scandalous breach of public faith which had been given for his security, he was brought to the stake. This Protestant martyr to the resentment of the Popish Clergy, endured his dreadful punishment with unparalleled magnanimity and resignation. expressing, in his last moments, the noblest feel-

ings of his love to God, and the most triumphant hope of the accomplishment of the promises which arm the true Christian at the approach of death. Sentiments very different from those of a seditious malefactor.

It is a gross evasion, by no means new, to endeavour to throw off the odium of such cruelties upon the Emperor. For the ecclesiastics pronounced the guilt though they always transferred the punishment of the offender to the secular power. A right, indeed, of inflicting *some* punishments upon heretics, they always claimed, and exercised themselves *. To have claimed the right of life and death would have been going farther than perhaps sovereigns would have been inclined to admit. To avoid the jealousy of Princes, and, at the same time, to maintain the hypocritical affectation of mercy in the midst of persecutions, they devolved capital punishments upon the civil Government. The canons against heretics, after going the full length of ecclesiastical censures, penances, deprivations, disabilities, depositions, confiscations, and imprisonments, in themselves a sufficiently formidable list of evils, deliver them over to the secular arm to inflict due punishment †. But the secular power, that is the sovereign of the country, was bound by another canon to *extirpate* all persons whom the Church should pronounce to be heretics. If he did not extirpate them, the pope absolved

* Decret. Causa XXIII. Quæst. 4. Cap. 38. etc.

† Sept. Decretal. Lib. V. Tit. 5. Cap. 2.

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his subjects from their allegiance, and gave their dominions to Catholics*. What is understood by extirpation is plain enough from the general practice; but this likewise appears upon record. The Emperor Frederic, to oblige the Court of Rome, enacted a law, by which heretics, and all persons who deviated in *one single article* from the Catholic Faith, should be burnt alive. This decree was approved and confirmed by the Pope, and introduced into the body of the canon law †. And we know that heretics were treated in the same manner in every Popish country in Europe. As well then might it be said, that a judge and jury have no power of inflicting capital punishments, because the ceremony of hanging is performed by the executioner, as that the Council of Constance, and the ecclesiastics had no hand in the martyrdom of *John Huss*, and in other persecutions of heretics, because they delivered over offenders to be put to death by the civil power.

It may be said, these are old stories, times are altered, the Romish Church is changed, and become liberal and tolerant like other people.—To shew that in these modern days they have abandoned neither the principle of persecution, or the practice, I shall relate an anecdote, to which I could bring the fullest attestations.—There is a gentleman, now living, who is at the head of

* Decretal. Lib. V. Tit. 7. Cap. 13.

† Sept. Decret. Lib. V. Tit. 3. Cap. 2.

a public department in England, particularly connected with persons of the Jewish Nation. A few years since, a respectable man and his wife of that persuasion came to the office upon some business. Whilst they were waiting, they began conversing with each other in the Spanish language, about their private affairs. The gentleman, with that honourable delicacy which marks the British Character, gave them a polite hint not to mention any thing which they did not wish him to hear, as he was well acquainted with the language of Spain, having been many years a resident in that country. The Jews proved to be natives of it, and this circumstance led to a conversation upon various subjects, in the course of which the gentleman was induced to lament the hardships which persons of their persuasion endured from the cruelty of the Inquisition. As an instance, he mentioned having seen a young Jewish girl, not more than sixteen years of age, burned alive at one of the *Auto de Fes*.—The woman, instantly, in the most dreadful agitation, screamed out in accents of horror impossible to describe, “that it was her daughter Leah.” and “that it was upon this occasion that the “family had quitted Spain.” She immediately sank senseless into her husband’s arms, and when a little recovered, was conveyed away in a state little short of distraction, from this accidental revival of the acuteness of her former feelings. Leah, it appeared, was young, beautiful, amiable, and virtuous ; modest in her

her deportment, affectionate to her parents, beloved by her acquaintance, and punctual in the performance of her religious duties. But that religion was, unfortunately, not the religion of the Romish Church, and she fell a sacrifice under the inexorable sentence of the Inquisition, which condemns all Jews, heretics and schismatics to the flames.

Another clause of the Oath of Allegiance, which requires the takers to disclaim the position that no faith is to be kept with heretics or Protestants, next comes under Mr. *Burke's* censure. He assures us that, "No Catholic **EVER** believed it. Catholics know, and believe that all kinds of deceit and duplicity are essentially bad, forbidden by the divine and natural law, of course, that there is no power on earth which can authorize them in any case.

I have already shewn that it *was* at least, the Catholic Doctrine that no faith is to be kept with Heretics, or Protestants, in the most important of all obligations, that of allegiance to the sovereign. With respect to deceit, and duplicity in general, let us again hear the Pope.

THE DECRETUM. CHAP. THE XXI*.

"*Simulation is useful, and is occasionally to be assumed.*" This he proves by many ex-

* Caus. XXII. Quæst. 2. Utilem simulationem, et in tempore assumendam Jchu Regis Israel nos docerat exemplum.—Nec mirum, quamvis justos homines, tamen aliqua simulare pro tempore ob suam et aliorum salutem, cum et ipse Dominus noster non habens peccatum, nec carnem peccati, simulationem peccatrici carnis assumpserit.—Ecce quæ mendacia sunt venialia et quæ damnabilia.

amples in scripture, one of them is a little extraordinary. "Nor is it strange that good men should sometimes dissemble for the salvation of themselves and others, since our Lord himself, who had no sin, or flesh which was capable of sin, assumed the *false appearance* of sinful flesh."—What is to be understood by *simulation* and *dissembling* is not left to conjecture; for it is immediately explained in these words, "Behold what *Lies* are venial and what are damnable."

Every man who knows any thing of the Romish Religion must be satisfied that it is the firm persuasion of its votaries, that if falsehood is ever justifiable, and is for "the salvation of themselves and others," it is wherever the glory and the interest of that Church are concerned. This is evident from what I am now going to state.—The Oath requires a declaration, "that it is taken in the plain and ordinary sense of the words, without mental reservation or equivocation, and that the taker does not believe that he can be absolved of this declaration by the Pope, or any authority whatsoever." Here again, according to Mr. *Burke*, is another unjust reflection upon the Catholics. "If duplicity," he says, "be criminal, 'tis blasphemy to make God an accomplice. As to any previous dispensation to deceive or to do any other evil, the Pope neither has, nor ever pretended to have, any power to grant it." Perhaps the Catholics may think it *no evil* to deceive a Heretic.

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That the Pope has actually granted a general *previous dispensation* from the Oath of Allegiance when taken to Heretical or Protestant Sovereigns, has already been shewn. I shall now produce a still more general previous *dispensation*, from Pope *Innocent* the Third, who has decreed, "That all oaths which are contrary to the advantage of the Romish Church, are to be considered rather as perjuries than oaths *." As it remains with the Romish Church itself to determine and define what is for its own utility, it is evident that this dispensation may be at pleasure extended in its application to every oath which the various occasions of civil society may exact. In short, that Catholics, may break through any oath whatever, whenever the interest of the Romish Church requires it.

I have now gone through all Mr. *Burke's* objections to the Oath of Allegiance, and, I trust, have fully established my position, that the doctrines there attributed to the Catholics were not calumnious fictions, and that the legislature did not require them to be renounced without very sufficient reasons.

That the Catholics of this Province, in taking the Oath, have sincerely disclaimed these doctrines, I hope and believe. I am far from attributing such maxims to them. I mean only to confute Mr. *Burke's* assertion that they

* Decret. Greg. Lib. II. Tit. XXIV. Cap. 27. The Chapter is intitled,—Juramentum contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam præstium non tenet. And the words of the decree are ;—Non juramenta, sed perjuria potius sunt dicenda, quæ contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam attentantur.

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never made a part of the Romish Religion.— Yet one may be permitted humbly to ask, if they were once declared to be Orthodox and Catholic by an infallible and unchangeable church, by what means have they ceased to be so? If they were held to be true doctrines two centuries ago, they must be equally believed to be so now, for time alone can produce no effect upon such general principles, and the unity of faith, which is said to be “the distinguishing character of the Catholic Church,” must extend to every period of its existence, as well as to every member of its communion, or it must be a vain pretence. For if a general principle, which was pronounced to be true a hundred years ago, is now, by the same authority, declared to be false, there is an end both of the infallibility, and of the unity, of the Catholic Church. At one of those periods it must have been in an error, and, in both, divided against itself. If these principles are only dispensed with, or the execution suspended, the same authority may again revive them. Instead of denying the existence of such doctrines, Mr. *Burke* would have done more service to his communion, and would have performed a task more satisfactory to all His Majesty’s loyal subjects, if he had resolved these doubts, which must naturally occur to every person who at all considers the matter.

II.

The next subjects for observation are Mr. *Burke's* principles of temporal authority, or civil government.

It is somewhat inconceivable, that, in a publication which professes to be written to enforce obedience to the constituted powers, so many pages should be occupied in teaching, and proving those very doctrines of the rights of the people, which have been the origin, and foundation, of all the revolutions of modern times.

Let us see these principles in his own words. "The different forms of Government depend upon the *wills and consent of the people*; hence it follows, that though all power in political Governments is from God; tis by *the ministry of the people* that God communicates it. This therefore is placed by God *himself in the great body of the people.*" He afterwards speaks more plainly, and calls it, *the right of the people to appoint their King, and to correct all abuses in government.*"

These maxims he proceeds to support by the scriptures, and by the authority of eminent British Lawyers.

"The principle," he says, "is proved by the history of *Saul and David*. If ever Princes were of divine institution immediately *Saul* and *David* were of the number, yet both the one and the other were invested with regal authority *by the people*. *Saul*; tho' anointed
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" by the prophet possessed no authority till
 " *elected by the people*, and 'tho' that election
 " by ballot was directed by providence; twas
 " not *the less free; nor the less dependent on the*
 " *will of the people* which is so true that be-
 " cause some of the *people* expressed their dissent,
 " Saul's authority was not confirmed till some
 " time after.—So *David* neither possessed nor
 " pretended to any regal authority; till the men
 " of *Judah* came and anointed him to reign
 " over *Judah*, nor the other tribes till after the
 " death of *Ishbosheth*. The writer remarks that
 " he reigned seven years, and six months
 " over *Judah*, and thirty three-years over
 " *Judah* and *Israel*; as if he had said in the
 " most express terms, that he *was King by*
 " *the appointment of the people*, and from the
 " time of that appointment, not before."

Now is there any one fact more plainly re-
 corded in the scriptures, than that both *Saul*
 and *David* were immediately appointed by
 God? Mr. *Burke*, indeed, in some measure
 acknowledges it. But let us attend more parti-
 cularly to the history itself *. The *Jews* had
 been governed by *Judges*, under the direct gui-
 dance of God himself, for a period of about
 four hundred years. When *Samuel* was grown
 old, disgusted by the ill conduct of his sons, the
Israelites became desirous of having a King
 like other nations. But, under these provo-
 king circumstances, the iniquity and injustice
 of their Governors, and wishing so earnestly

* 1 Sam. Ch. x. xi. xii. etc.

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for a change in the form of Government, did they proceed to make a revolution, and to elect a King? No, the scripture on the contrary informs us that they came to *Samuel*, and requested him, as the prophet of God, to make them a King, or to give them a King to judge them. So little does the scripture suppose that they had a free right to alter the form of their Government of their own accord, that even their wish to alter it, through the intervention of the prophet, was highly displeasing to God, and was considered as an act of rebellion against him *. God however at last consents to their request; and directs the prophet to appoint a Sovereign. “And the Lord said to *Samuel*, hearken unto their voice, and make them a King.” In consequence God sends *Saul* to the prophet, and directs him to anoint *Saul* to be King over his people *Israel*. Then *Samuel* took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? whether he manifested this his appointment to the people by lots, or any other manner is immaterial. That God appointed him of his own free choice is very clear, for when *Saul* appeared, “*Samuel* said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord, (not the people) hath chosen, and all the people shouted and said, God save the King.”

Some of the people indeed, as Mr. *Burke* says, “expressed their dissent,” but the scrip-

* Hof. ch. 13. v. xi. 1 Sam. ch. 12. v. xvi.—xxv.

ture

ture has likewise expressed its opinion of them, by calling them *Children of Belial, or the Devil* *. *Saul* however took upon him the Government, and led his subjects to victory. After this *Samuel* proposed to the people, "Come let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there." And all the people went to Gilgal, and there made *Saul* King. Upon this occasion, *Samuel*, in God's name, tells all Israel, "Behold I have hearkened unto your voice, and have made a King over you." Every passage is conformable to these. When *Saul* offended God, he said it repenteth me that I have set up *Saul* to be King †.

From this history it is evident that *Saul* was appointed, and even anointed King, before any form whatever of election took place. Afterwards, come the ceremonies which Mr. *Burke* calls the *Election*.

Now an election, if it means any thing, is a right of chusing, or rejecting, any person proposed to fill an office. An election to choose, without a power of rejecting, would be no election at all. If Mr. *Burke* then be right in his representations, that the election of *Saul* was a free election, and dependent on the will of the people, it follows, that the *Israelites* had a right to reject that person whom God himself had appointed to be their King. Or, since he brings his example as a proof of a general principle, it is the fair conclusion, that democracy or the right of the people to chuse their King,

* 1 Sam. ch. 10. v. xxvii.

† Chap. 15. v. xi.

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is a right of so imprefcriptible a nature, that it is not to be controuled by God himfelf.

But the juft conclufion which every man muft form from the tranfaction is this. That fince *Saul* was really appointed King by God himfelf, whatever was done by the people was mere matter of form, and ceremony; a folemn ratification of the appointment; a public testimony on the part of the *Israelites* of their fubmiffion to God's choice, and an acceptance on the part of the King, and the mode of his entering upon his Government. A ceremony fomewhat fimilar to that of an Englifh Coronation.

It is equally clear that *David* was appointed by God alone, without any choice in the people. When God was offended with *Saul* for difobedience, he fent *Samuel* to him to tell him, "The Lord hath rent the Kingdom of *Israel* from thee, and hath given it to a "neighbour of thine*." God then fent *Samuel* to *Jeſſe* informing him that *he had provided a King* among his fons. The manner of the appointment is very remarkable, for all *Jeſſe's* fons were brought in review before God. When they were come *Samuel* looked on *Eliab*, and, ftruck with his prepoſſeſſing figure, ſaid, ſurely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord ſaid unto *Samuel*; Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his ſtature; becauſe I have refuſed him; for the Lord ſeeth not as man ſeeth; for man

* 1 Sam. xv. 26.

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looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Seven of the sons were in the same manner rejected, and *David* the youngest was sent for from the sheepfold and anointed to be the future sovereign of the Jews. Here was the real election, and God not only chuses the King himself, but he even declares the unsuitness of the people to chuse.—*Man looketh only on the outward appearance.* After *Saul's* death he was publicly anointed, as *Saul* had been before. The influence of *Abner*, who was commander of *Saul's* armies, and the attachment of many of the *Israelites* to the family of the late King, induced them to resist *David's* authority. But the fact of resistance by no means proves the right to resist. The opposition of the *Israelites* was in disobedience to God's declaration, and a rebellion against a lawful authority. Accordingly the scripture informs us that God set his face against it, *David's* party waxed stronger and stronger, whilst *Saul's* adherents grew weaker and weaker; *Abner* and *Ishbosheth* both perish, the *Israelites* finally submit to *David*, and express their obedience by the usual ceremony of anointing him King.

The same consequence follows as in the case of *Saul*. If the ceremony of anointing was an election, then the people had a right to set aside God's appointment of their king. But it does not rest even here. *David's* elevation to the throne had a much more important object than the mere temporary government of

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of the Jews. It formed a part of the mysterious system of redemption. That Messiah, whose coming, and the manner of it had been revealed by a succession of prophets, and most particularly unfolded to the patriarch *Jacob*, was not only to be of the race of *Abraham*, but the son of *David*, and of all the Kings of *Judah*. It was in this relation that God promised *David* "that his throne should stand for ever." Now if, as Mr. *Burke* asserts, *David* was made king by the appointment of the people, under the right of choosing their own sovereign, under a free choice, dependent upon their own will; which includes an alternative of rejecting, it would follow, that they would have had the right and the power, of defeating God's plan respecting the Messiah, and that the whole scheme of human salvation stood trembling upon the event of a popular election.

The examples of *Saul* and *David* then afford no argument in favour of the *Rights of Man*. Nothing like election appears in the succession of the other kings of *Judah*. The throne was established in the family of *David*, and the government was hereditary. Yet the same form of inauguration continued which had been employed upon the appointments of *Saul* and *David*. The new king was anointed, crowned, and received the acclamations of the people. Thus *Rehoboam* succeeded *Solomon* by the hereditary succession, yet the scripture uses the same language, for it says that all

Israel came to *Shechem* to make him
"King." *

The revolt of the ten tribes in the reign of *Rehoboam* and their electing *Jeroboam* for their king, though acted "*by the express or tacit consent of a great majority of the people,*" no less than ten parts out of twelve, I hope will not be quoted as an authority for the right of the people to chuse their sovereign. It was a complication of rebellion, impiety, and idolatry. They forsook, at the same time, as is not unusual in more recent transactions, of the same sort, their king and their God; and he justly punished them for it, by carrying the whole nation into captivity, never to be again restored.

But it is not from examples alone that Mr. *Burke* deduces his arguments; he says that "this right of the people to appoint their king" is formally declared by *Moses*." In my apprehension, he declares directly the contrary. "When thou art come," says the inspired lawgiver, "into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say, I will set a king over me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall chuse." † He expressly excludes the people from electing, and reserves the choice in every case to himself. The appointments which he thus declared to be with himself, he actually and universally exercised; their three first kings, *Saul*, *David*, and *Solomon*, he appointed

* 1 Kings, xii. 1.

† Deut. xvii. 14, 15.

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by name, and then established an hereditary government in the family of *David* *.

If Mr. *Burke* could misrepresent the scriptures, it could scarcely be expected that the *Lawyers* would fare better under his hands. With respect to both his legal authorities, *Blackstone*, and *Bracton*, he has been guilty of unfair quotation. By taking a part only of their statements, and separating them from what goes before, or follows after, by laying down as the general rule what is intended merely as an exception; by *altering their expressions*, and by *adding words of his own, in their name*, he has made them both to hold doctrines *directly contrary to their real opinions*.

The first quotation is this, as it stands in Mr. *Burke's* book, "A philosopher," says Justice *Blackstone*, "will consider a King as a man appointed by mutual consent to preside over many, and will pay him that RESPECT which the principles of society demand." This passage taken by itself, especially with the alteration which he has made in it, by substituting the softer word *respect*, for what *Blackstone* himself styles *Reverence and duty*, is certainly democratical enough, by representing the king upon the lowest footing possible. Could any man suppose that it was extracted from an author, who in that very chapter, and paragraph, from which it was taken is stating, and describing the very highest points of His

* 1 Sam. x. 21. Ib. xvi. 12. 1 Chron. xxviii. 3. 1 Kings, ii. 4.

Majesty's dignity and prerogative, and is demonstrating their necessity to the support of society, and the maintenance of our civil liberties? Yet all this will appear upon reading his own words at length. "Under every monarchical establishment, it is necessary to distinguish the prince from his subjects, not only by the outward pomp and decoration of Majesty, but also by ascribing to him certain qualities as inherent in his royal capacity, *distinct from, and superior to those of any other individual in the Nation. For, though a philosophical mind will consider the Royal Person merely as one man appointed by mutual consent to preside over many others, and will pay him that reverence and duty which the principles of society demand. Yet the mass of mankind will be apt to grow insolent and refractory if taught to consider their Prince as a man of no greater perfection than themselves.* The law therefore ascribes to the King, in his high political character, not only large powers and emoluments, but likewise certain attributes of a great and transcendent nature; by which the people are led to consider him in the light of a superior being, and to pay him that awful respect, which may enable him with greater ease to carry on the business of Government." *

From these sound political principles, Mr. Burke has extracted, and disseminated, those doctrines only, which, however true abstract-

* Blackstone's Commentaries. Book I. Ch. 7.

edly speaking, Sir William Blackstone says, *if taught to the mass of mankind are calculated to render them apt to grow insolent and refractory.*—How this agrees with Mr. Burke's text, "Remind them to be subject to princes and powers, to obey magistrates, and to be prepared for every good work," I am unable to discover. He has administered the poison without the antidote.

The quotation from Bracton, which is taken likewise from the Commentaries, in Mr. Burke appears thus:—"The King is under the Law, because the Law makes the King." Recollect that this very passage is produced to prove that Governments depend on the will and consent of the people, and that they have a right to correct all abuses in Government, and then consider whether that doctrine is much favoured by Bracton's words at large:—"The King" says he, "*ought not to be subject to Man, but to God, and the Law; for the Law maketh the King.*" It is impossible to find a passage more decidedly adverse to the principles which it is garbled to support.

"From these principles," Mr. Burke continues, "the Justice concludes that there are in society inherent latent powers *to correct all abuses in Government*, which no climate, no time, no constitution, no contract can ever destroy, or diminish." I have already shewn that he has misrepresented those principles, and that no such conclusion can therefore be drawn from them. But, in this passage

sage the most material words, "to correct all
 "abuses in Government." which he has quoted as Blackstone's, are not Blackstone's, but
 entirely his own. This will appear from
 the passage at length. That eminent Lawyer
 states it to be the legal doctrine, "that the
 "King is the representative, and minister of
 "God upon earth, that every thing is under
 "him, whilst he is subject to none but God.
 "That his person is sacred, and that no jurisdic-
 "tion upon earth has power to try him;
 "that if such a power of jurisdiction over him
 "were vested in any tribunal, there would soon
 "be an end of the Constitution." Such is the
 general doctrine, and he then proceeds to con-
 sider what remedy the law has provided in
 case the Sovereign should be so ill-advised as
 to be guilty of most grievous public oppression;
 and he observes, that if the oppression,
 "tended to dissolve the Constitution, to sub-
 "vert the fundamentals of Government;
 "should advance with gigantic strides, and
 "threaten desolation to a state; in such cir-
 "cumstances we must leave to future genera-
 "tions, whenever necessity, and the safety of
 "*the whole* shall require it, the exertion of
 "those inherent, though latent powers of so-
 "ciety, which no climate, no time, no consti-
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 "nish."

All that Blackstone's doctrine amounts to,
 is this:—That in such extreme, and extraor-
 dinary cases, where the very existence of so-
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ciety is endangered, a country must employ such extraordinary means, as their prudence shall suggest to them. But Mr. Burke has taken a part of Blackstone's words, which relate only to this extreme case, and has applied them to a general power of "*correcting all abuses in Government*," not only attributing to Blackstone those words, which are entirely Mr. Burke's own invention, but making, by such insertion, that truly Constitutional Lawyer to hold democratical principles, as opposite as light and darkness, to those which he has been stating and proving through the whole of his admirable Chapter upon the King's prerogative, from which Mr. Burke pretends these expressions are extracted.

Since then Mr. Burke's political doctrines are supported neither by the scripture or the lawyers, which indeed make directly against them, his *divine ministry of the people* must stand upon its own foundation.

How far such abstract rights might exist among a number of men, not formed into society, and where all things were in common, it is useless to examine, as it is a state which does not subsist in this country, or perhaps any where else. We have here both a regular government, and private property, and Mr. Burke's principles lead to the abolition of both. That a majority of the people, as a mere majority, are invested with these rights of government, without any regard to property, and other considerations, in practice has never been

been admitted by the most ardent democrats. In all the constitutions which revolutionary madness established in France, some qualification of property and independance limited the right of suffrage. But Mr. *Burke* makes mere number the test of lawful government, and holds that no political power can be vested in any man or body of men but by the express or tacit consent of *a great majority of the people*.

But observe the extent of these principles. Since as Mr. *Burke* asserts, all political government is from God, and is communicated by the ministry of the people, they have the power to change it whenever they please. Nor, according to him, are they bound to consult any other rule in the change than their own sovereign pleasure. "If the authors of the revolution," says Mr. *Burke*, "were justifiable, or not, or even, in the most unfavourable sense, suppose them *perfectly unjustifiable*; if the American revolution was as *causeless* as some writers have represented it; still, he says, "it does not in the least diminish the force of his reasoning." The despotic people then, without cause, and without justification, may destroy a subsisting government; the political power established by them becomes immediately a lawful authority. They may again alter it *causelessly*, and *unjustifiably*; still all is right. They may repeat the experiment again and again as often as their inclination for such pastime recurs; these ministers of God can do

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no wrong. Such a political system, if system that can be called which has in it nothing of stability, no fundamental law, no rule of right and wrong but popular caprice, in confusion and mischief does not yield precedence to the most downright anarchy. In plain English the doctrine is this, that a successful rebellion is no rebellion at all, but a lawful act; for if even the least numerous party in a country can once get the government into their own hands, the pike or the guillotine, are never failing receipts to insure the tacit consent of all the rest.

But Mr. *Burke's* doctrines cannot be considered as mere remote speculation, they must either apply to the government under which we live, or they are perfectly useless and irrelevant. As he is writing for the instruction of his own congregations, he must be understood to intend to teach them something which is applicable to their own situation, something which may serve them as a rule of action.

He is scarcely forming plans of political morality for the new government in the Mississippi, or for the subjects of the King of Monomotapa? When he lays down a political principle in general terms, and without any exception, it must necessarily include the British Empire, and it must even principally refer to it, and to this part of it in particular. I totally deny then that these governments are valid only because they have been approved by a great majority of the people. I will suggest another and much surer foundation; it subsists by the
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laws, of the Country, which have established the British constitution, and which no individuals, no body of men, no majority of the people, have a right to contravene, or to resist. These have indeed ascertained that the people shall have a certain share in the government by their representatives, but the general form of that government, the succession to the throne, the privileges, and prerogatives of the crown, and each distinct part of the constitution, are perfectly independent of any choice in the people : not a shadow of any thing like election is to be seen in them. The right of electing a sovereign has been wisely renounced by the British Empire from the earliest periods of its existence. To revive it would be totally to endanger the unity, peace, and tranquility of the nation ; to give life to desperate and envenomed faction, and to expose it to deluges of blood, and the unispeakable evils to which an elective government is exposed ; evils which peculiar circumstances may perhaps for a time prevent, but which must inevitably happen sooner or later, as long as ambition, self-interest and resentment, shall continue to hold a place in the human breast.

Such were not the principles of the authors of the revolution in the reign of *James the Second*, to which *Mr. Burke* refers. They were anxious to explain, and to justify their conduct to the nation, not by recurring to any supposed right in the people to nominate their Monarch, but as an act of absolute necessity, under

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under new and unprecedented circumstances, the King's abdication of the government and an actual vacancy of the throne. And even then they did not have recourse to the dangerous expedient of an election but they preserved as nearly as possible the old line of hereditary descent, and the established forms of the constitution.

Of these principles, though open to a great many observations, I shall say nothing further, than that they are the corner stone of all the modern sweeping revolutions, that they compose the creed of all Jacobins, and are the essence of the destructive doctrines which were so successfully propagated by *Tom Paine*; that they are maxims which *Mr. Burke* cannot preach without violating his oath of Allegiance, and which his congregation cannot practice without incurring the guilt of high treason, and committing the sin of rebellion.

III.

I now enter upon the last subject I proposed to examine, *Mr. Burke's* opinions respecting Spiritual Authority.

By the Oath of Allegiance, it is required of the persons who take it to declare, that they do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign Prince hath any *temporal*, or *civil power* within this realm. This doctrine, I believe, in terms at least, the Romanists have never controverted, and it is therefore admitted by *Mr. Burke*. But could any man have imagined by what arguments he has supported

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it ? He has proceeded to prove that all political, civil, and temporal jurisdiction, and pre-eminence are vested in the King, by denying that he has any *spiritual power, authority, or jurisdiction whatever*. It is a curious method of reminding people "to be subject to princes and powers," by pointing out to them, that there are certain subjects upon which they may lawfully disobey them. Nothing in the oath certainly required his saying a word upon the question, because it mentions only civil or temporal authority.

To Mr. *Burke's* assertion then, that "no temporal prince can possess any spiritual powers, authority or jurisdiction," it is a complete answer to say, that it is an assertion *directly contrary to the law of the land, and the British Constitution*; which declare the King to be on Earth the *Supreme Head of the Church of England*; which is the religion established by law in this Province. On that solid foundation I shall therefore leave the subject, as far as relates to mere external authority, but I shall proceed to consider the pretensions of the Romish Church to spiritual authority; in a religious point of view; which I am the more induced to do, as Mr. *Burke* upon this head has brought forth all his strength, and indeed it is the most prominent feature in his whole publication.

The spiritual power, which he denies to the King, he has transferred to the Pope, as the successor of *St. Peter*, and with a superlative
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tainly ever laid claim to, for he gives him all
the authority which Christ exercised upon
earth. The manner in which he has introdu-
ced this topic is no less curious than the mode
of bringing in the last. For as he there proved
that the King had every temporal authority by
totally denying his spiritual power, so now he
has demonstrated that the Romish Church can
possess no temporal power, because they hold
the highest spiritual authority that can be con-
ceived.

How much every man of all religious per-
suasions, is interested in this enquiry, the fol-
lowing considerations will shew. To judge by
names only, and the great number of distinct
congregations, it might seem that an infinite
variety of different religions were comprehend-
ed under the general denomination of Chris-
tianity. But the least attention to their tenets
will make it obvious, that there are only *two*
really distinct classes of Christians, who differ
from each other in essential points; these are,
the Protestants, and the Papists. The essen-
tial difference between them is this, that all
Protestants acknowledge no other rule of faith
and doctrine than the Holy Scriptures; where-
as the Roman Catholics hold the Pope, and
under him the Popish Clergy, to be the repre-
sentatives of God, and of Jesus Christ; and
consequently that their authority is equally a
rule of faith and doctrine with the Holy Scrip-
tures, and equally binding upon the consciences

of men. Nay, that the Scriptures themselves are to be understood only in that sense which the Romish Church thinks proper to give them : From this material difference as to the very sources from whence religion is to be deduced naturally flows an immense number of other variations, which it is not necessary now to enumerate. On the contrary, between the numerous sects of Protestants, there is no difference whatever as to what is the general rule of faith and doctrine. The distinctions arise merely upon the construction of the same law, which produces a difference of opinion, either upon the mere external forms of religion, or upon mere speculative points of little importance to the substance of Christianity.

That this is a true representation, is manifest from one consideration ; that there is no denomination of Protestants who do not candidly admit that salvation may be obtained in any of the other Protestant sects. The same criterion will shew that there is an impassable gulph between the Catholics and *all* the Protestants, since it is one of the popish doctrines that salvation cannot be obtained out of the pale of the Romish Church.

In chusing therefore between the different Protestant persuasions, a man may consult his own fancy and caprice, his habits, or his prejudices, without fear of going very far astray from the truth, and certainly without much danger of totally missing his way. Tho' in an equal balance of opinions not essential, where

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where no material point of faith, or doctrine stands in his way, by every rule of society, and every principle of Christian prudence, *the Established Church* is entitled to his preference, because in matters of indifference every member of a community ought to submit to the regulations established by lawful authority; and every good man must wish by such conformity, to promote the general harmony of the Christian body, rather than to give occasion to discord, hatred, and uncharitableness, which are too often the consequences of separations and divisions.

But between the Romish Church, and Protestantism generally, the choice is infinitely important. For if the Romish be the true Church then must we assent to its assertion that safety is not elsewhere to be obtained; or, on the other hand, if its pretensions are unfounded, it is not difficult to prove that its errors are of a very essential nature.

"Unity of faith," says Mr. *Burke*, "is a distinguishing characteristic of Catholics." —To say nothing of many other disputes and dissensions, which divide and distract the members of that Church, upon a variety of points, both of doctrine and discipline, they are far from being agreed upon that most essential question, the extent and limits of the power and jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, and it is to this day unsettled, whether the Pope alone, or the Pope and a Council, or a Council without the Pope, are possessed of infallibility. That

infallibility is lodged *somewhere in the Church of Rome*, they are all unanimous, and, from his publication, I presume Mr. *Burke* is of that most numerous, most vehement, and most orthodox party of the united faith, which bestows it upon the Pope.

Let us see what is the nature of the dignity which is attributed to the Pope, or Bishop of Rome. The essence of it indeed is comprehended in Mr. *Burke's* definition, all the authority which Christ exercised on earth*. But it will more plainly appear if it is a little more displayed as it is described in the authentic creeds and canons of the Church. He is regularly styled the Successor of Saint *Peter*, the Prince of the Apostles, the Vicgerent, or representative of God, and of Jesus Christ, and possessing the keys of Heaven†. Consequently infallible, enjoying full power over all nations, and kingdoms, above all councils, judging all, himself in this world being subject to none‡. To him all Catholics are bound to promise and swear true obedience; and under his authority the Romish Church is the only Catholic and Apostolic Church, the mother and mistress of all Churches§.

No man can be required to believe the existence of such a very extraordinary authority without the completest demonstration of its reality.

* Mr. *Burke's* pages 30, 31.

† Pope Pius's Creed.

‡ Sept. Decret. Lib. V. Tit. 3. Ch. 3. Decret. Lib. 1. Tit. 6. Ch. 4.

§ Creed, Art. 23.

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It is proper to premise here a remark which is applicable to every part of these observations; that I have not the most distant idea of entering into any controversy with Mr. *Burke* respecting any of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church generally, or considered with regard to the members of that communion. Nothing that he could have published within the limits of his own church, would have drawn any answer from me. But he has not confined himself within these limits; he has sallied forth and has attacked all other religions. Taking for his ground-work that the Church of Rome is the only true Church, he denies the validity of all other ordinations, he treats all other ministers as persons who assume to themselves an office into which they have impudently intruded themselves without any right whatever, and as misleading their congregations into dangerous errors. To defend myself and all other protestant ministers against these insinuations which are levelled not only at the Church of England but at every description of Protestants; and to shew that if Protestants do not submit to the claims made by Mr. *Burke* on behalf of the Romish Church to exclusive spiritual authority, they have *at least some reasons to alledge* in support of their Christian liberty, these and these only are the motives of the following enquiry.

In considering the evidence brought forward by the Romish Clergy in support of their spiritual

tual power, I shall reduce my observations to the following propositions.

1. That an infallible authority, whether in the Pope, or in the Church at large is a *miracle*, which cannot prove itself, or be proved by the tradition of those who are parties interested in it; and that it is capable of proof only from divine testimony; that is either by miracles, or scripture, and since miracles no longer exist, by scripture alone.

2. That there are no passages in scripture which prove it *directly and in express words*; that the only texts produced are ambiguous and figurative, of which the meaning is only to be discovered by inference, and the usual modes of interpretation.

3. That, in interpreting scripture, that sense of an ambiguous and figurative passage is to be preferred which is most natural, and conformable to the rest of scripture; and that sense is to be rejected which leads to inconsistency, and is contradictory to the rest of scripture.

4. That this infallibility is an inconsistency, inasmuch as it is unnecessary, contrary to the known laws of the divine administration, and derogatory from the excellence of the scripture itself.

5. That all the texts of scripture, produced in support of this infallibility are capable of another more natural sense than that the Romanists have given them, and that the meaning adopted by them is not the true meaning

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6. That it cannot be inferred from Christ's words that such power was given to *St. Peter*, because it is contrary to other parts of scripture, and nearly the same expressions are applied to all the Apostles.

7. That it was never claimed by *St. Peter* himself.

8. That it was never allowed by the other Apostles.

9. That it is not proved either by scripture, or authentic history, that the Popes are the successors of *St. Peter*, that their claims were unknown in the Christian world for many centuries, and were never submitted to by those churches which were most certainly planted by the other Apostles.

10. That the personal characters and conduct of many of the Popes are inconsistent with their infallibility.

11. That the doctrines of the Popish Church, and their novelty, are irreconcilable with a divine origin.

PROP. I.

Infallibility, or as Mr. *Burke* states it, that capital errors, either in faith or morality, shall never be found in his Church* is a miracle. For man is naturally a fallible creature, and liable to err. If this is true of individuals, it must be equally true of any society, or body of men ; for there can be no qualities in the

* Mr. B. page 30.

whole

whole which does not consist in the component parts. The union of any given number of fallible beings cannot produce an infallibility. This quality therefore, whether it is supposed to be vested in the Pope, in Councils, or the Church at large, would be equally miraculous.

But how is such a power to be proved? Infallibility differs from almost all other miracles, with which we are acquainted, in that *they prove themselves*. When the Red Sea divided, and the Walls of *Jericho* fell down at the sound of a trumpet; when the blind received their sight, the lame walked, and the dead arose from their tombs, these external visible signs, obvious to all capacities, manifested the agency of the divinity. But infallibility is not an object of the senses; it produces no outward effects contrary to the usual course of nature; it cannot command conviction by performing any acts of supernatural power. It can be established therefore only by external proof.

One species of proof brought forward by the Papists, in support of this authority, I must object to totally; that such has been the *tradition of the Church*. All traditions must be of an ill savour among Christians, because a great part of Christ's life was spent in combating them, and in shewing that the Jews had made God's word of none effect by their traditions. But what does tradition upon this point amount to? Neither more nor less than

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than this, that the Romish Clergy require us to believe that they possess a most extraordinary degree of power, because they have been in the habit of saying so for many centuries, and of anathematizing all who presumed to contradict them. The testimony of men in their own cause, and to their own advantage, was never admitted to be good evidence in any cause. But there are likewise particular reasons for distrusting Catholic testimony to such facts. It is now well ascertained that many writings have been *forged* to enrich and aggrandize the Romish Church. Agreements, decrees of Councils, and other records were actually fabricated, by which it might appear that in the first ages of the Church, the Roman Pontiffs were clothed with the same majesty which they assumed in more modern days. Such forgeries were esteemed meritorious on account of their supposed tendency to promote the glory of God, and to advance the prosperity of the Church. Besides many learned protestants who have satisfactorily demonstrated the spuriousness of many of these ingenious performances, the fiction is acknowledged by the Roman Catholics; at least by such of them as are possessed of any tolerable degree of impartiality*.

This authority being derived from God himself can be proved only by a plain, and ex-

* For my authority I refer to the Ecclesiastical Historian, Mosheim, who quotes the *Centuriæ Magdeburgenses*. Blondel who has written a treatise upon some of these forgeries. Cardinal Fleury, Huet, and Petr. Contantius, Baronius, and Steph. Baluzius.

prefs declaration from him, manifested to mankind by methods perfectly incontrovertible ; either by the holy scriptures, or by outward miracles. The power of working miracles was certainly asserted by the Romish Church in the days of the darkeſt ignorance, but that ſort of argument I ſuppoſe will not be openly inſiſted upon at preſent.

PROP. II.

The Scriptures then are the only guide upon this head ; and if ſuch authority is there explicitly and in direct words declared we muſt ſubmit to it without hesitation. But no ſuch paſſage is to be found. All the texts produced for that purpoſe are ambiguous, uncertain, and figurative, and their meaning can only be diſcovered by conjecture, and the uſual modes of interpretation.

PROP. III.

This propoſition is too evident to require proof, I therefore merely repeat it,—That, in interpreting ſcripture that ſenſe of an ambiguous and figurative paſſage is to be preferred which is moſt natural, and conformable to the reſt of ſcripture, and that ſenſe is to be rejected which leads to inconfiſtency, and is contrary to the reſt of Scripture.

PROP. IV.

In examining the texts which are quoted to ſupport this authority, the nature of the authority itſelf is a material conſideration, Infallibility I have before ſhewn to be a miracle. Now God never works a miracle without ſome

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some necessity ; for to say that infinite wisdom ever deviates from the established order of things unnecessarily is the height of absurdity. Of all the undoubted miracles with which we are acquainted the reasons are apparent. Under the old testament, the establishment, and preservation of the knowledge of God, and his laws ; under the new testament the proof of the divine mission of his son, afford adequate objects for the extraordinary interference of divine Power. If it can be shewn therefore that an infallible authority is unnecessary, as *far as mere reasoning* goes, it is a conclusive argument against it. And though mere reasoning cannot overturn a decidedly clear declaration of the Almighty in Scripture, yet it may serve not a little to help us in discovering the true meaning of such passages as are doubtful and capable of different interpretations.

Now the necessity of an infallible authority in the Church depends upon one sole question—Whether it is necessary to human salvation ? For to no other purpose, for no other end, is it supposed to be given even by those who make pretensions to it. And this question is to be resolved by another,—Whether the holy scriptures are sufficient for that purpose ? For if the holy scriptures are sufficient for human salvation, then is an infallible authority in the Church unnecessary.

To assert that when Christ came into the world to save sinners, he did not teach them all things

things necessary to that end, or that when the Evangelists were inspired to commit those doctrines to writing the inspiration was imperfect, is to deny the goodness, the wisdom, or the power of God himself. Besides the impiety of such an opinion it is contrary to the scriptures themselves, which declare in many places their own sufficiency. Saint *Paul* saith to *Timothy*. * From a Child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The sufficiency of scripture is confirmed by the *internal evidence* arising from the nature of Christianity itself. It is extremely simple. Christ came to abolish a ceremonial law, and to substitute in its place a religion of the heart, which must be comprehended in a very few precepts. Every supposed defect, must relate either to points of faith, of practice, or of mere œconomy. But every article of faith is distinctly taught, the existence and attributes of God, the Trinity, the Character of Christ, the mysteries of Redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and whatever else has been the subject of belief to Christians of all descriptions. This is admitted by the Church of Rome, since it

* 2 Tim. III. 15. v.

has not presumed to alter, or to make additions to them. Upon these points it agrees with the reformed Churches. The same Creeds in general are common to both. No omissions can be charged upon the scriptures in matter of practice.—Our saviour has reduced the whole to two precepts.—*The love of God, and the love of men.* The rest of the gospel is only a commentary upon these duties, shewing their application to particular cases. Still less occasion is there for infallibility for the purpose of regulating those outward forms, and ceremonies, which however convenient or decent, are not necessary to salvation. For instance public prayer is a general duty, but it certainly could not require an extraordinary power of infallibility to determine who were the proper persons to perform the office. Where human prudence, wisdom, and discretion are abundantly equal to the task, it is presumptuous to suppose that God would work a miracle.

But it is said, that there are many things in the scripture obscure and hard to be understood; and therefore it is necessary there should be an infallible authority to explain them. Difficulties, and obscurities it is true there are, but they are confined to mere speculative points and subjects not necessary to be understood for our salvation. All essential doctrines are most clearly revealed.

When Saint *Peter* says that in *St. Paul's* Epistles are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to

their own destruction, he adds, as they do also the other scriptures. The plainest and clearest parts of the Gospel may be, and have been, dreadfully perverted and misunderstood, by weak, or enthusiastic brethren. By such persons the doctrines even of an unerring Church might be misunderstood as easily as a text of Scripture, and therefore the Church's infallibility would not afford an effectual remedy in such cases. Many things were no doubt designedly left obscure, many others appear to be so from the imperfection of the human faculties, and because in this state we only see things as through a glass darkly: many difficulties the most learned men of the Romish Church are incapable of explaining. If these obscurities were such as to prove any impediment to salvation the prophets and apostles would not speak of the Scriptures as sufficient for that purpose; nor in those terms which imply their clearness. If our Gospel be hid, says Saint *Paul*, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, should shine unto them *. Thy word, says the inspired Psalmist, is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path †. The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes ‡. It is impossible that God should vouchsafe to cause a book to be written, containing his divine law, which should yet be so

* 2 Cor. IV. 34.

† Ps. CIX. 105.

‡ Ps. XIX. 8.

negligently

negligently composed, and so ænigmatical, as to leave men in the dark in what most materially concerned them, and was the only object of the revelation. It is scarcely credible that the Gospel, which was preached to the poor, to the ignorant, and the unlearned, should have been beyond common comprehension. Upon the whole it is much more consistent with God's wisdom, and goodness, that he should have revealed his will by the Holy Scriptures so plainly as to be sufficient for salvation, than that he should have left them so imperfect, or so unintelligible as to require a perpetual miracle to explain them.

PROP. V.

Having shewn that the infallible authority of the Romish Church is incredible, because it would be an useless, superfluous miracle, contrary to reason, to all the experience we have of miracles, and to all our knowledge of the divine dispensations, and includes in it an impious assumption that the Scriptures are not sufficient for salvation, I shall examine the texts of Scripture produced by Mr. *Burke* in support of it.

That the Christian Church belongs to Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who will feed his sheep, and who came to govern all nations is undoubted *. But the distance between our Saviour and the Romish Clergy is immense. The question is whether he has communicated the same powers to them. A man must have

* Mr. B. pages 23, 24, 25, & 32.

a strong talent for faith before he can believe that the expressions used of the Messiah, can apply to the Romish Church, and that it was said of the Pope and his Clergy that David should be king over the people, their prince for ever, who should rule them with a rod of iron. That when Christ declared, that he himself is the door, and that if any man enter the sheep-fold but through the door, he is a thief and a robber *, that he confined all rights of teaching his Gospel and of salvation to one set of men.

“ We are now to enquire in whose hands “ Christ has placed this supreme authority. † ” According to Mr. *Burke*, Saint *Peter* the chief pastor was first invested with it ‡; and from him it descended to his successors, the Pope, and Clergy of Rome. Saint *Peter* was appointed to conduct the flock of Jesus Christ with that authority which he himself exercised whilst visible to his flock §. ‘Till the end of time the Church must rest on *Peter’s* spiritual powers in his successors ||. I am at present examining only the power and infallibility of the Church in general; Saint *Peter* and the *Pope* I shall consider afterwards.

For this inheritance of power Mr. *Burke* has stated a regular legal title, in due form. A *Testament* and two *Commissions*. That both parts of the Bible were called the Old and New Testaments, we know, and that the word Testament in the original language signifies a Covenant, namely the Old Covenant

* John Ch. X. Mr. B. p. 29. † p. 29. ‡ p. 29, 30. § p. 30. || p. 30.
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of the law, made with the Jews, and the New Covenant of Grace which was entered into with Christians. We know likewise that *St. Paul* has compared the Gospel to a Testament, in the other sense, meaning a will, because it received its efficacy from the death of Christ, as a will becomes valid by the death of the testator *. But that Christ really made “a testament in the common acceptation of the word, an authentic instrument by which a dying person conveys rights and powers which are at his disposal,” † and did thereby intail this infallible supremacy upon *St. Peter*, or the Apostles, and the Pope, is to me perfectly new. I can find nothing of it in the Bible. If *Mr. Burke* had not denounced such dreadful punishments, as the earth’s opening and swallowing up all who should presume to usurp any part of this ministry, under any other title, I should really think that he meant to be jocose.

Now for the First Commission.

“Christ assembled his twelve Apostles and gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out.” Men in those days were sometimes possessed by real devils, who produced an effect in the minds and bodies of those unhappy persons something resembling madness. The Apostles expelled them from this corporeal possession as we see in the account of the herd of swine and other instances; this is a plain matter of fact, but *Mr. Burke* has trans-

* Heb. IX. 15, 16.

† *Mr. Burke*, p. 25.

ferred

ferred it into an allegory, and makes it to mean a "power purely spiritual and necessary in the Church till the consummation of the world to deliver souls from the slavery of sin." This passage relates clearly to the casting out of devils, merely, and was only personal to the apostles, not a word does it say of the Church or of the end of the world.—"Next is added by the Evangelists, that he gave them power over diseases and infirmity."

As there are now no perceptible devils to cast out, and Mr. *Burke* renounces the power of working miracles, I do not see what benefit the Romish Church can derive from this *first Commission*.

The third ground upon which he rests the authority of the Romish Church is in what he calls the "*last and most important Commission*." It is this, Christ says to his Apostles*, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Saint John adds "That Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said peace be to you, and shortly after he said again, peace be to you, *as the Father sent me I send you*. That is as Mr. *Burke* explains it, as the Father sent me with an *exclusive power* of sending others, so I send you with the same power of sending others. The Evangelist continues.—Whole sins ye forgive are forgiven and whose sins ye retain are retained.—This power Christ vested in the eleven Apostles, and *enabled them to communicate it to others*.—Or as he before

* Mark XVI. 15.

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stated it, the spiritual authority was vested by Christ immediately in his Apostles, and by their ministry was transmitted to their successors. When Christ says, "as the Father sent me I" "send you," he must be understood to mean only that as the father had sent him to preach the gospel, so had he sent them to preach it likewise, and to authorize others to preach it. But it by no means follows from hence that he gave them the same authority and power which he himself possessed, much less that he enabled them to communicate to others, and in succession to the Pope and the Romish Clergy that authority which he himself exercised whilst he was visible to his flock. Christ says nothing of transmitting any such power. That all that power has not been transmitted is clear. Mr. *Burke* admits that in Jesus Christ were some powers that were incommunicable. The power of working miracles has not been handed down to the Pope and his Clergy, such as speaking with tongues, and healing sickness. This extraordinary power, Mr. *Burke* says, was given because it was necessary to attest the truth of their mission; from whence it may be inferred that if it had not been necessary it would not have been given; as in the present state of Christianity. Infallibility is a standing miracle because man is naturally a very fallible being. A power of forgiving sins is equally a miracle, for no man can have it but by the immediate gift of God. Now apply the same mode of reasoning to these miracles

miracles as to other miracles, and the same conclusion will follow, that as it is now not necessary so it has not been given.

These authentic instruments the will, and the two Commissions then are not sufficient to support the pretensions of the Church of Rome.

PROP. VI.

But whatever powers were given to *the Apostles in general* so far from proving the right of the Romish Church they are destructive of its claims, which are derived from a superior and exclusive power supposed to be given to Saint *Peter*.—"He is the Prince of the Apostles and the Vicar of Christ 'till the end of time the Church which is one compact body must rest on *Peter's spiritual powers* in his successors, Christ promised him the chief government of his Church."—Christ commits the *whole of his flock* to *Peter's care**—If the same Powers were given by Christ to *all* the Apostles what becomes of Saint *Peter's* pre-eminence?

"Let us now, says Mr. *Burke*, discuss minutely the powers granted to *Peter*, the chief Pastor, and the terms in which those powers are granted†." I accept the challenge, and enter with alacrity upon the discussion, which I mean to pursue with *very considerable minuteness* because they are "the foundation which support the edifice of the Romish Church, and the edifice cannot subsist if removed from this foundation.‡"

* Mr. B. p. 50.

† p. 29.

‡ p. 30.

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The principal passages of scripture, which are repeated by Mr. *Burke*, to found his assertion "that Saint *Peter* and his successors the "Popes were appointed to conduct the flock of "Christ with that authority, which he him- "self exercised," and which is the basis of the Romish religion, are these. The first is a passage in Saint *Matthew*.—where Jesus says to Saint *Peter*, I say unto thee that thou art *Peter*, and upon this rock or stone I will build my Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*.

The second is in Saint *John*, in which Christ after his resurrection charges *Peter* "to feed "his sheep†."

It is evident that the power and authority claimed for St. *Peter* is not here *expressly* mentioned, there is not a word of pre-eminence over the other apostles; No infallibility; No Bishopric or Popedom; No successors, in direct terms. The whole is metaphorical, for *Peter* was certainly not literally a Stone, or a Rock; nor was a real edifice of a Church to be built upon him; it will not be supposed that there are material gates to Hell, or actual locks to Heaven, and, that Christ delivered to *Peter* the corporeal keys of them; or that the binding spoken of was to be performed by ropes

* Math. XVI. C. 18, 19 v's.

† St John XXI. 15—18.

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or chains.—So respecting his feeding the lambs and sheep, it was not the animals of that name which are to be understood.—Since then these words cannot be taken literally, we are left to discover their *figurative meaning* by considering the subject matter, by inference, by consulting our own common sense, and most particularly by comparing them with other passages of scripture which are more plain and direct.

What is the general signification of these words I shall not attempt to inquire. They are undoubtedly somewhat obscure. All metaphors, and allegories must necessarily be so; because they are *comparisons* which substitute the thing, in which a likeness is perceived, in place of the principal subject to which it is compared. In these figurative modes of speech from one thing expressed we are left to discover the exact nature of something else which is understood, merely from a similitude of which we cannot ascertain precisely the extent, or in what exclusive circumstances it may consist; since no two things are perfectly alike in all respects. It seems however rather extraordinary that a point of such vast importance should have been left to be discovered by allegories and metaphors and not distinctly and directly declared. But it is unnecessary to determine their *general signification*, for all the meaning with which we have to do at present is merely to consider whether Christ intended by them to bestow a pre-eminence upon *Peter*,
above

above all the other apostles, and to give him an exclusive authority over his Church which was to descend to his successors;—and I think it is very clear that he did not.

To judge from the language and conduct of our Saviour upon other occasions, it seems rather contrary to his doctrines, and the spirit which he was desirous of instilling, to vest such a pre-eminence *any where*. When the Twelve disputed among themselves which was greatest? he reprov'd them, and said,—If any man desire to be first the same shall be last of all, and servant of all *. Again,—Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master even Christ, and *all ye are brethren* †. And it must be observed, that both these declarations of equality amongst the Apostles, were made by Christ, at different times *subsequent to* his using these words to Saint Peter respecting his being the rock, which are supposed to confer such an extraordinary pre-eminence upon him.

That these words conveyed no peculiar privilege upon him is evident, because nearly the *same expressions* are applied in other parts of Scripture to *all the Apostles*. The same allegories occur in several other places. Saint Paul tells the *Ephesians*, that they are built upon the foundation of *the Apostles and Prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an *holy temple* in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded to-

* Mark IX. 34, 35.

† Math XXIII. 8.

gether for an habitation of God through the spirit *. Saint *Paul* says of himself, According to the grace of God which is given unto me; as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* In the *Revelations*, Saint *John*, describing the heavenly Jerusalem, says, the wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and in them the names of the *twelve apostles* of the Lamb†. In this sense these passages are very intelligible, for since it was the apostles who taught the world the Christian religion, Christianity might be said to be built upon them as upon a rock or foundation. So as to binding, and remitting sins; Christ assured all the apostles, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven‡. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained§. The keys of heaven are evidently another allegorical description of the same power which is expressed by binding or loosing in heaven and which is more clearly pointed out in other places as the power of forgiving sins. Of feeding Christ's flock Saint *Peter* says himself. The elders which are among you I exhort, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the over-

* Ephes. II. 20, 21, 22.

† Rev. XXI. 14.

‡ Math. XVIII. 18.

§ John XX. 23.

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fight thereof. Neither as being Lords over
 God's heritage, but being enlamples to the
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 appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory*.
 At Ephesus, Saint *Paul* called together the
 Elders of the Church, and exhorted them, To
 take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock,
 over which the Holy Ghost had made them
 overseers to feed the church of God†.—What-
 ever is to be understood by “ the gates of hell
 “ not prevailing,” those words could convey
 no particular authority to Saint *Peter*, for
 they are spoken not of him, but of *the Church*.—
 The gates of hell shall not prevail against it—
 not against *him*. Nor do they prove the in-
 fallibility of the Romish Church. The word
 Church in the scriptures is not confined to any
 particular description of persons. It signifies
 in the most general sense, any assembly. At
Athens it was the name of the public assembly
 of the people. So it occurs in the same sense
 in the Acts, and it is applied to a company of
 people assembled in a Heathen Theatre:‡
 for the word there which is translated assembly
 in the original language is the same which is
 usually interpreted the Church. The Jews
 assembled at Mount Sinai, are called by Saint
Stephen the Church§. Under the same general
 idea it is applied most usually, to the whole
 body of Christians or persons possessing Christi-
 anity in any particular place. Thus in the
 Acts, it is said that a great persecution was rai-

* 1. Pet. V. 1—4. † Acts XX. 28. ‡ Acts. XIX. 32. 40. § Acts. VII. 38.

fed against the Church*.—That elders were appointed in every Church†. Saint *Paul* says, he had the care of all the Churches‡; and asks the *Corinthians* in what they were inferior to other Churches§. St. *John* utters prophecies in the Revelation concerning the seven Churches of *Asia*. Nay St. *Paul* even calls the Christians in one particular private house, the Church in the house of *Priscilla* and *Aquila*||. In one place he salutes *Nymphas*, and the Church which is in his house¶; and in another he addresses himself to the Church in *Philemon's* house**. Since then it is evident from scripture, that the word Church is a general term applied to the whole body of Christians, there is no ground in the world, either from the reason of the thing, from the passage itself, or from other parts of scripture, to suppose that in this passage, it is confined to one set of men, to the exclusion of all other Christians. In this natural and usual sense of the word, the expression, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church, must be understood to refer to the perpetuity of Christianity, or that Satan would never be able to extirpate the Christian Religion from the world; that religion of which *Peter*, and the other apostles, under Christ were to be the founders. When there is on one hand, an explanation so natural, so unforced, so conformable to other parts of scripture, what un-

* Acts VIII. 1. † Ch. XIV. 23. ‡ 2. Cor. XI. 28. § 2 Cor. XII. 13.
 || Rom. XVI. 5. ¶ Coloss. IV. 15. ** Philom. 2.

prejudiced

prejudiced man of common sense does not see that it ought to be preferred to another, unnatural, forced interpretation, contrary to reason and to scripture, and which leads to the belief of such an inconsistency as an useless unnecessary miracle.

If Christ had actually appointed Saint *Peter* to be the *Prince of the Apostles* so early in his ministry, this authority must have appeared in other parts of Christ's discourses and conduct; but there are no other passages in scripture from which it can be inferred; he treats Saint *Peter* with no other peculiar marks of attention, employs him in no authoritative office, and requires no obedience or submission from the rest. It does not seem therefore that Christ himself understood his own words as conveying such authority.

PROP. VII.

There are extant a great many speeches of Saint *Peter*, in the Acts of the Apostles, and there are likewise two Epistles written by him, the latter shortly before his death. His great zeal, and activity in preaching the gospel, are every where conspicuous, but in none of these compositions, whether addressed, to Jews, to Gentiles, or to Christians; in private conversations, or in councils, and public Assemblies of the Church, does he *assume to himself* any such pre-eminence. In his Epistles he styles himself simply, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and also a partaker of

the glory which shall be revealed. If he had been the infallible Prince of the Apostles, it is scarcely conceivable that he should have omitted to state his high authority, since it would have given great additional weight and effect to his precepts, his exhortations, and his reproofs, and a peculiar propriety to his warnings against false teachers and heresies.

PROP. VIII.

It does not appear in any parts of the scriptures that the other Apostles considered Saint *Peter* as having any sort of superiority over them. It is remarkable that Saint *Matthew* is the only Evangelist who has mentioned the words of Christ respecting *Peter's* being the rock. Saint *Mark* and Saint *Luke*, relate the same story of *Peter's* confessing Jesus to be the Messiah, but totally omit the passage in question.—Saint *John* only relates the words of Christ to *Peter*, feed my flock.—If those words had conveyed such an authority to Saint *Peter*, over all the Church, a doctrine upon which the whole Constitution of visible Christianity depended, which so infinitely interested the Apostles themselves, and which it was so *absolutely necessary* for all Christians to be informed of, must have been known to all the Evangelists, and, if known, could not have been passed over in silence by the greater part of them. The omission proves that the Evangelists considered them as of no great importance.

The disputes amongst the Apostles for superiority

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periority, generally, and the request of the Mother of *Zebedee's Children*, after this supposed investment of Saint *Peter*, shew that they did not understand that *he* had any superiority.

If the Christian Church ever stood in need of a spiritual and infallible ruler ; it was in the distressing times immediately after the death of Christ, and we might have expected to have seen *Peter*, supplying the place of his deceased master, and directing his ardent spirit to the exercise of his deputed authority. Nothing like it appears. That eminent Saint is indeed conspicuous at that critical time, he is seen active, and fervent in zeal, forward in every good work, in healing the sick, and in sufferings, earnest in prayer, and frequent in harangues ; but of any power or authority claimed, or exerted by him, or submitted to by the other Apostles not a single trace is to be found. He appoints to no offices, he decides no differences, he prescribes no doctrines, he gives no directions. As Christ chose the twelve Apostles, if *Peter* was appointed to conduct his flock with that authority which he himself exercised, it would follow that it was his office to have filled up the vacancy occasioned by the fall of *Judas*—but *Matthias* was elected to that station by the disciples, and by lot*. It was all the Apostles jointly who proposed the institution of Deacons, and they were elected by the “ whole multitude.”† So

* Acts I. 15—26.

† Ch. VI.

far from *Peter's* directing the other Apostles, that upon one occasion they *sent him to Samaria* * to instruct the new converts. The disciples who were converts from Judaism, instead of submitting to a known authority, contended with him†, nor did *Peter* in answer to them refer to any power as Vicar of Christ, but endeavours to satisfy them by a statement of reasons. When there were dissensions and disputations among the brethren respecting circumcision, the question was not referred to *Peter* for his decision as *must* have been the case if he was the infallible representative of Christ, but it was discussed among the Apostles and Elders and by them decided;‡ and their solemn judgment upon the subject which was sent to *Antioch*, is in the name of the Apostles, the Elders and brethren, no mention being made of Saint *Peter*. Saint *Paul* declares that he himself was nothing behind the very chiefest of the Apostles §, and speaks likewise of himself as upon an equality with *Peter*; the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to me as the gospel of the circumcision was unto *Peter* ||.

But, without enquiring farther, the second Chapter of the Epistle to the *Galatians*, affords decisive evidence upon the subject.—St. *Paul* relates an occurrence which is totally inconsistent with the representation given of St. *Peter* by the Romish Church. To prevent

* Acts Ch. VIII. 14. † Ch. XII. 2. ‡ Ch. XV. § 2 Cor. XII. 11.

|| Gal. II. 7.

any possibility of misconception, I shall state the affair in the Apostle's own words.

"When *Peter* was come to *Antioch*, I "withstood him," says Saint *Paul*, "to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came with *James* he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews *disssembled* like-wise with him; insomuch that *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not up-rightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto *Peter* before them all,—If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" He then proceeds to shew that men are not to be justified by the works of the law but by faith of Jesus Christ.

Here then we see, *first*, that Saint *Peter* was in an error respecting one of the most important points of the Christian Religion, inasmuch as that he taught the Gentiles to observe the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law, which Christ had abolished. The opinion that those rites were necessary to salvation, has been combated by Saint *Paul* with all the force of his eloquence, particularly in the Epistle to the *Romans*. It was nevertheless entertained by a number of persons, who, in subsequent times, entirely separated themselves from the ordinary

nary assemblies of Christians, and were, at length, stigmatized as Heretics under the names of *Nazarenes* or *Ebionites*.

We see, *secondly*, that Saint *Peter* was incorrect in his *conduct* likewise. Having associated with the Heathens, through fear of the Jewish converts, he withdrew himself from their society, and endeavoured to conceal that circumstance by dissimulation; deceiving others and inducing them to follow his example.

Thirdly, Saint *Paul* publicly rebuked him in the congregation of Christians, for these erroneous doctrines and improper behaviour; because, the Apostle says, he was to be blamed and because he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel.

This passage is pregnant with information. It totally destroys all idea of Saint *Peter's* *Infallibility*, for if there is any truth in Saint *Paul*, his doctrines were at that time erroneous, and his conduct incorrect. Nor can that fact be explained away, by his having held the true doctrine in the Acts, and in his Epistles, for his infallibility is gone, if after Christ's death he held errors at any time. It completely overturns the assertion that Saint *Peter* was the Prince of the Apostles, not only from those errors, and misconduct, but likewise because Saint *Paul* so far from being subject to his authority *withstood him to his face, and publicly censured him*. Did *Peter* then exercise the same authority which Christ, whilst in his mortal state, and visible here on earth

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earth exercised? * Would Saint *Paul* have withstood Christ to his face, would he have charged him with being to blame, a dissembler, and one that walked not uprightly? This event happened no less than nineteen years after the crucifixion, and, consequently, if *Peter* had been appointed by Christ in his life time to such pre-eminence, it must have been then fully established and admitted. Such decisive authority is sufficient to overturn every conclusion which may be formed from the supposed interpretation of a declaration, couched in very ambiguous, obscure, and metaphorical expressions, like those of our Saviour to Saint *Peter*.

PROP. IX.

But whatever might be *Peter's* powers, and authority, there is another long step to take to prove that the Popes or Bishops of *Rome* are his successors, and even, if they were his successors, that the same powers have been given to them. There is not one passage in the Scriptures, by which it is either expressly declared, or from which it can be inferred, that Saint *Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*, or even that *he had ever set his foot in that city*. His transactions occupy a considerable portion of the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, but it does not appear there that the Capital of the Heathen World was benefited by his labours, or honored by his visits. No traces of any connexion with the place, or any mention of it whatever, are to

* Mr. B. p. 31.

be discovered in his own Epistles. His first is dated from *Babylon*, and is addressed to the strangers scattered throughout *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*, and *Bithynia* *. His second Epistle was written shortly before his death to the same persons; it is not dated from *Rome*, and there is nothing in the contents of it from whence it can be inferred that it was composed there †. In Saint *Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans*, there are no hints of Saint *Peter's* being Bishop there, of any pre-eminence in that Church, or in the Bishop of it. And though he concludes with sending his greetings to a great many persons, Saint *Peter's* name is not included in the number. Nor indeed does the Bishopric of *Rome* seem very appropriate to the particular calling of Saint *Peter* which was that of Apostle of the circumcision, as Saint *Paul* was of the uncircumcision. For though doubtless there were many Jews at *Rome*, yet their chief residence was in *Judea*, and the neighbouring cities, whereas *Rome* was the principal place of the Gentiles. If *Peter* was ever Bishop of that place, he must have deserted his original vocation.

There is not then the smallest authority in *Scripture* for saying that Saint *Peter* was ever Bishop of *Rome*, and consequently that the Popes are his successors. And here we might rest satisfied, for if the authority of Saint *Peter* and his connexion with the *Romish Church*,

* I. Chap. I v.

† Chap. III. 1.

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cannot be proved by Scripture, it has not that evidence which so important a doctrine requires, before it can command the reasonable assent of mankind.

The circumstances of Saint *Peter's* ever having been at Rome, and most undoubtedly of his having been bishop of it, are very far from being established even by AUTHENTIC HISTORY. They are not supported by any contemporary authority, but depend solely upon the assertions of writers, who lived many years after the time, and whose general character for credulity, and particular errors in many other points, are admitted even by the Romanists themselves. Bishop *Bull*, one of the ablest and most learned men who have written upon ecclesiastical affairs, after examining and weighing all the evidence upon which it rests, concludes in these remarkable words, "It is doubtful whether Saint *Peter* ever was at Rome, but that he fixed his chair there is a very idle and groundless imagination."

If Christ had invested the Popes, through Saint *Peter*, with such high authority it could scarcely have been so long concealed. Revealed so early, the knowledge of it must have prevailed universally. It must have been ingrafted into the Christian Religion itself, and been co-extensive with its propagation. But if we consult the genuine history of the Church, we find that it remained totally unknown, at least was not brought forward in its full extent, for many centuries after Christ. The eastern

Churches of *Constantinople*, *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, and *Asia Minor*, which were planted by the Apostles, and some of them even by Saint *Peter* himself, never heard of such an authority, and when it was claimed by the Church of Rome, they treated it as a pretension totally unfounded, and *never* submitted to it. It was declared by the Council of Nice, " that the " Patriarchs of *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, had " the same authority over the Countries round " them, that he of Rome had over those that " lay about that City." A mere precedence in point of rank they allowed him, the first place among equals, but not a shadow of power, authority, or real pre-eminence over them.

Saint *Cyprian*, Bishop of *Carthage*, whose writings are received among the works of the holy Fathers by the Roman Church*, resisted these encroachments of the Pope, and insisted with the utmost warmth upon the equality in point of dignity and authority that subsisted among all members of the episcopal order ; he rejected with contempt the Pope's interference, and asserted that Bishops were answerable to God only†.

Cyprian is acknowledged as a Saint in the Romish Church, and prayed to as such ; yet from his works one of the most learned men of this age has declared, that, " if *Cyprian's* authority

* Decret. Distinc. XV. Cap. 3.

† *Cyprian's* own words are. Habet in ecclesie administratione voluntatis suae arbitrium liberum unus quisque praepositus, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus. Epist. 72. p. 129.

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" blishing the Parity of Bishops." Even in the
West, *Irenaeus* Bishop of *Lyons*, and other
prelates early expressed their resentment, and
censure against these encroachments, and many
of the European Provinces, when the arro-
gance of the Pontiff was at its height, pre-
served some remains of their ancient liberty, and
independence. England and France never
totally submitted to the papal pretensions,
though a variety of circumstances artfully im-
proved, and the great ignorance of the times
enabled the Popes to advance, to extend, and
finally to establish their authority, over almost
all the Churches of the west.

PROP. X.

History affords many other proofs of the
falseness of these pretensions. The character,
and conduct of many of the supreme Pontiffs
is conclusive against their divine authority and
infallibility. To say nothing of many bad
men in other periods, almost all the Popes du-
ring the ninth, and tenth centuries were a
disgrace to human nature itself. " During
" this time," says an eminent writer, " there
" was a succession of not less than fifty Bishops
" of *Rome*, so remarkable for their wicked-
" ness, that *Annas* and *Caiaphas* were Saints
" in comparison to them." It is impossible to
suppose that God would confer a miraculous
gift upon persons who resisted even his ordi-
nary grace.

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In the Apostolic age, a bishopric was only a station of eminence in toil, in poverty, and in danger. When the Holy See grew rich and powerful, it became an object for worldly ambition. Intrigue and faction prevailed. The seamless coat of the Church was rent by scandalous schisms. Sometimes two, nay even three Popes, at the same time, were seen roaming about the world, excommunicating and anathematizing each other, and all pretending to infallibility. It was upon an occasion of this sort that the Council of Constance was assembled, to restore the tranquility of the Church which had been thrown into dreadful confusion by the election of three different persons to the papacy, by the names of *Gregory the Twelfth*, *Benedict the Thirteenth*, and *John the Twenty-third*.

Mr. *Burke* says, "Christ has not placed the disposal of his authority in the hands of the people *. Spiritual authority is not communicated to the people at large, nor by the ministry of the people. The people at large possess no spiritual power or authority, to pretend to vest in others what they don't possess themselves, is, to qualify it in very mild terms, an unwarrantable assertion."—When Mr. *Burke* makes these broad declarations, is he informed, that, for a thousand years from the death of Christ, the Popes were chosen by the General Assembly of *Rome*? And that all the clergy, the nobility, the burghesses, and the

Mr. B. p. 25.

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People had a vote in the election? That it was Pope *Nicholas* the Second, about the year 1060, who first endeavoured to restrict the general right of election, by giving the Cardinals the power of deliberating first, though he adds himself, that "the consent of the other clergy, and of the *People* shall be required to confirm their choice?" And that it was not 'till the next century that *Alexander* the Third had the address, to transfer and confine the right of electing entirely to the College of Cardinals?

I have already stated the pious frauds of the Pontiffs to support their assumed power. Before the end of the eight Century they had forged a deed of gift from the Emperor *Constantine*, by which he was made to resign to them the sovereignty of *Rome, Italy*, and all the Provinces of the West. It was published to the World and declared to be authentic by Pope *Adrian* the First, and is enrolled among the decrees of the canon law. At the restoration of learning the fiction was detected; its falsehood is now admitted even by Cardinal *Baronius*, and other advocates of the Romish Church, and the very Pope himself laughs at it, as appears by an anecdote related by Cardinal du *Perron*. Cardinal *Cusanus* acknowledges candidly that he found manifest proof for the forgery, and falsehood upon the face of the writing itself*.

This fiction was applied not only to con-

* Cardinal *Cusanus*'s own words are:—"Reperi in ipsa scriptura manifesta argumenta consilioris et falsitatis."

vey a temporal power, but it served pretty strongly to insinuate, if not directly to assert, that the Pope was the Deity himself.

For Pope *Nicholaus* says "It is shewn evidently enough, that the Pontiff can neither be bound, or loosed, by the secular power, since it is plain that he is called God by the pious Prince *Constantine*; and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by man *.

Whilst such were the heads of the Church, it would not argue any great want of charity to suppose that the inferior ministers were not of the most unspotted purity. Yet Mr. *Burke* says, that "the abandoned profligacy of the Clergy is a calumny as often refuted as published." What credit is due to his charges of "calumny" is I think already pretty evident to the reader. Every page of history, every ecclesiastical writer, swarms with the general accusation, and with particular examples of the fraud, the arrogance, the extortion, the unbridled licentiousness, and the enormous crimes of the Clergy, and Monks of all denominations before the reformation; proved too by most authentic documents. Nor do the more judicious, and best informed among the Romanists pretend to deny a fact, which is established beyond all possibility of contradiction.

PROP. XI.

The *internal Evidence*, derived from the

* Decret. Dist. 96, Cap. 7. Satis evidenter ostenditur, à sæculari potestate nec ligari prorsus, nec solvi posse Pontificem, quem conat à pio Principe Constantino (quod longè superius memoravimus). Deum appellatum: nec posse Deum ab hominibus judicari manifestum est.

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nature of the popish religion itself, affords another strong argument against the Church's infallibility. Now though it may be said, that, if, as is asserted, the Church is infallible, its decisions must be right, however absurd, or wicked they may seem to be; yet, as this infallibility is not *directly proved* to our satisfaction, but is left to be collected from circumstances and inferences, it is not unfair to bring its doctrine to the test of the holy scriptures which we actually know to be infallible.—What is certain affords the best criterion whereby to judge of what is doubtful. If then the Church of Rome imposes doctrines contrary to or inconsistent with Scripture, as has been fully proved at large by many learned writers, it affords good reason to believe, that its authority is not derived from the same source, from the eternal God, “with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.”

It is not my present purpose to enter into a discussion of the Doctrines of Popery in the detail. But since Mr. *Burke** has brought forward one of them, and painted it in very delusive colours, it may be proper to notice it. I mean the belief, that the Saints and Angels are to be honored and prayed to, and that they do pray to God for us.—’Tis matter of surprise, he says, that any man can prevail on himself to refuse the Saints and Angels in heaven a power which *Moses* exercised with efficacy, “And *Moses* prayed unto the Lord,

“and the Lord was appeased;” a power which Sinners exercise praying one for the other.”—This Doctrine is open to the following observations. 1. The Scriptures no where teach us to pray to Saints and Angels. 2. Neither the old or new Testament can furnish a single example of it. *Moses* praying to God for the *Israelites* whilst he was alive, and which it was his office to do, is no more to the purpose, than a Church of England Clergyman’s praying for the King and People every Sunday at Church. Could a single instance have been produced in which the *Israelites* had prayed to *Moses* after his death it would have been a stronger case in point. 3. We are commanded to serve God only, and to pray to him. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. 4. The Scripture tells us that there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus†. If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ ‡. To apply to the Saints to perform these offices, is to deny the efficacy of Christ’s mediation, or to doubt his goodness.—5. St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* refused to be worshipped upon earth.—6. When Saint *John* was going to worship an angel he refused.—“See thou do it not for I am thy fellow servant.”—7. Is there any sufficient assurance that they are in a situation to hear our prayers? 8. If good men go to heaven immediately upon their deaths, is there any certainty that all who

* Math. XV. 10. † 1 Tim. II. 5. ‡ 1 John II. 1.

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have been canonized have actually found their way thither? God only knows the human heart, by which alone men are judged.—Contemplate a *Becket*, and an *Anselm*, made Saints by the Pope for insulting their sovereigns, and opposing their authority.

Mr. *Burke* says, “the only power Saints and “Angels possess are to pray for us. That they “can grant us neither Grace nor Glory.”—The liturgies published under the authority of the Church prove that the Saints are prayed to for every blessing in heaven above, and in the earth beneath.

Mr. *Burke* says, “they (that is the Protestants) do not consider that if there be any thing “new in the doctrine which they pretend to “teach, it must be of their own invention.”

I might answer by asking, What has time to do with truth? The novelty of an opinion may be indeed a reason for bringing it to the test of a candid examination, but it is no proof whatever of its falsehood. Mankind were not created omniscient, knowledge is not intuitive; the progress of all science has been slow and gradual; even religion itself was not revealed all at once, and there was a time when Christianity itself was unheard of. The mathematical Theorem, that the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides of a right angled triangle is a truth which subsisted from all eternity, yet it was unknown until it was demonstrated by *Pythagoras*. How many of the laws of nature had been in operation

operation ever since the creation before they were discovered by Sir *Isaac Newton*, and other philosophers?—The Continent of America was probably co-eval with the world, yet who was certain of its existence until *Columbus* pointed out the way?—If the errors of Popery continued undetected during whole centuries of ignorance, was truth excluded by prescription?

But which religion, I should be glad to know, is most open to the charge of novelty at all; the Protestant persuasion which takes for its *only rule and guide the Holy Scripture*, the word of Christ and his Apostles, and consequently is as old as Christianity itself, or the Romish Church, which has derived most of its doctrines from the decrees of Popes, and the decisions of Councils, in times long subsequent, to those of Christ and the Apostles? The precise time when each of these distinguishing tenets of that Church were first introduced, their gradual Progress, and final establishment, have been distinctly traced, and correctly ascertained. Most of them were subsequent to the first public establishment of Christianity by Constantine, above three hundred years after the death of our Saviour. From this time new doctrines, and new corruptions encreased in a regular gradation to the completion of the enormous fabric by the Council of Trent.

These doctrines were therefore rejected by the protestants at the reformation, because upon diligent enquiry, and the light of learning which began

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began to beam upon them, after ages of spiritual darkness, they were fully satisfied that they were the inventions and additions of men.

Protestantism is the Christian Religion purified from the corruptions by which its real nature was almost hid and extinguished. It is the sincere doctrine taught by Christ and his Apostles, and professed by Christians in the earliest ages.

The infallible supremacy which we justly refuse to the Popish Church, we do not claim for ourselves. Protestants admit no human spiritual authority as binding upon their consciences. They look for their religious duties no where but in their Bibles. Their ministers impose upon them no other doctrines as necessary to salvation, exact no other practices, than what are there clearly to be found. They do not require their congregations to submit implicitly to their authority, "but they request them to judge what they say, to prove all things, and to hold fast that only which is good*." To take God's word for their law and that reason, which God has given for their guidance, as their best interpreter.

Yet these are the unassuming men, whom Mr. *Burke* † accuses of "an intolerable excess of pride, little inferior to that of the Demon the King over all the Sons of pride. To whom he applies the words of Scripture they prophecy falsely, 'tis a lying vision, and divination the fraud and seduction of their

* Cor. X. 15. 1 Thess. V. 21.

† Page 41, &c. &c. &c.

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" hearts."—of whom he says that " they are
 " deluded men, wild enthusiasts, canting hypo-
 " crites, self taught and constituted teachers, and
 " judges of the world. Who obtrude with ama-
 " zing confidence, or rather unparalleled effron-
 " tery, the ravings of their wild imaginations,
 " on a well meaning and piously inclined but
 " ununiformed people ; thieves and robbers ; de-
 " serving the dreadful punishment which God
 " inflicted upon *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram* for
 " presuming to usurp a ministry which he had
 " placed in other hands ; *those of the Church of*
 " *Rome !* men in a state of Perdition, in the
 " gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity ; de-
 " ceived by the spirit of illusion, mistaking Pha-
 " risaical malevolence for pure Christian zeal.
 " Agents and emissaries of that foul fiend,
 " whom the Scripture emphatically calls a liar,
 " and the father of lies, of the party of the de-
 " vil, and imitating his envy."

These are the flowers of eloquence which
 Mr. *Burke* has scattered with so liberal a hand
 over the whole body of Protestant Ministers.
 The Church of England, the Presbyterians,
 the Anabaptists, the Methodists, and all other
 Non-conformists, of every denomination, are
 all equally comprehended in them ; for the
 Church of *Rome* holds them all equally here-
 tical. " Though their faces are different,"
 says the Pope, " their tails are all tied toge-
 " ther, because they agree in vanity." I have
 selected these choice passages as a curious spe-
 cimen of the language in which a person flin-
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ling himself a Christian Clergyman, can in-
dulse himself without provocation, against all
other Christian Clergymen, who happen
to differ from him in opinion. It may
serve likewise as a fair sample of the tolerance
of the Romish Church, and may teach an
useful lesson to all descriptions of Protestants, of
what might be expected if its power was equal
to its good will.—If they say these things in the
green wood, what would they not do in the dry?

To every good man who feels an interest
in the tranquility of the world, the restless and
assuming spirit manifested in Mr. *Burke's* Let-
ter presents a lamentable picture. No sooner
are the Roman Catholics permitted to enjoy
the free exercise of their religion, than their
pastor flies in the face of the Government by
which they are protected, furiously attacks all
other persuasions, and wishes to monopolize
the kingdoms both of this world, and the next.
Popery had not been tolerated in this country
much more than twenty years when this pub-
lication appeared; and let it be for ever recor-
ded in the annals of this Province, that the
very Chapel where Mr. *Burke* now erects his
Battery against all Protestant places of worship,
was in a great measure built by the friend-
ly and voluntary subscription of Protestants.

With respect to Mr. *Burke's* jacobinical
doctrines, it is in vain to say that they were
introduced inadvertently or without any bad
intention. To a man who has taken so much
pains, and used such disingenuous means to

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support them, they must have been objects near his heart. Equally absurd is it to alledge that other and better principles are taught and professed likewise, and that the general tendency of the publication seems to be a good one. In these days, when jacobinism is become so generally detested; and all governments are so much upon the alert against it, no man would dare to profess such doctrines openly and directly; they must be introduced and disseminated covertly, and guardedly, suspicion must be avoided, and even an outward appearance of obedience and loyalty may be made the stalking horse to cover designs destructive of both. A few pages indeed at the beginning are quite as constitutional, as the best subject could express, but after that, except a part at the end where unlawful oaths are condemned, almost all the book is occupied with those subjects, and principles, which it is the design of these observations to point out; principles totally *inconsistent* with the professed object of the Letter. If Mr. *Burke* really thought insurrection so great an evil as he states it to be, would he have been so earnest in propagating the jacobinical rights of the people? If he so much respected Government, and honoured "our most gracious sovereign," would he have endeavoured by such arts to lower the salutary prejudice which ought to be entertained respecting all Royal persons, and would he have robbed His Majesty of one of the brightest jewels in his crown

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crown, his ecclesiastical supremacy? Would he have totally counteracted his injunctions to submit to the powers that are, by rendering all civil powers insecure, and dependant upon the pleasure of the people? Establish but once in the minds of men this divine, indefeasible *ministry of the people*, and the rest of his book is totally useless. Impress them once with a firm conviction that all lawful power is derived from them, and stop them from exerting their sovereign authority if you can, by the sentiments of prudence, and duty, at the beginning of the pamphlet. It is like setting a house on fire at all ends, and throwing a bucket of water upon it. It all comes to this short point, if Mr. *Burke* was sincere in his wishes to promote subordination, *he could not* have introduced any doctrines of a directly opposite nature; but if his designs were to promote Jacobinism, he could not have found a more judicious, and effectual mode of doing it than by using a cloak of a different colour. Jacobinism is irreconcilable with loyalty, but loyal pretences are not inconsistent with Jacobinism. Loyalty could require no mixture of Jacobinism to make it palatable, but perhaps a draught of pure Jacobinism would never have been readily swallowed, unless the edge of the cup had been a little flavoured with more wholesome principles.

But it is not merely a question of *intention*; such doctrines he *has actually taught*, and they are too flattering to human pride not to make

make a deep impression. The divine ministry of the people will be remembered, when the maxims of subordination are forgotten. Suppose then that these principles should produce here the same effect which they have done in other countries, *even contrary to Mr. Burke's intentions*, is he aware that he would be answerable before God and man for the dreadful consequences which might ensue.

Whatever may be the design, and however well imagined the means, there is indeed reason to hope that they will not prove successful. The air of this country seems as little adapted to nourish the contagion of democracy, as it does that other, but not greater scourge of mankind the yellow fever. It has been founded, peopled, cherished, and grown to its present prosperity under loyalty; and it is difficult to conceive what advantages it could gain from an opposite conduct. Many of its present inhabitants, and their forefathers, have been too great sufferers in their property, and their persons, by the principles which Mr. Burke is now introducing and inculcating, very readily to adopt them. An immense majority of the inhabitants of the Province are Protestants, and as loyal subjects as any in his Majesty's dominions. The Roman Catholics have been always hitherto equally conspicuous for their attachment to their King and Country, for their liberality of sentiment, and for the propriety of their conduct. This well deserved character all men of sense among them will

will no doubt be zealous to preserve, and to manifest upon every occasion, since both their duty, and their interest must point it out to them; but it is difficult to say what changes may have been wrought in the minds of weak, ignorant, and unprincipled persons, such as are unhappily to be found in every communion, from the doctrines which are now first publicly taught by their principal pastor. This open avowal of such principles however will have one good effect—that of putting Government, and all good subjects upon their guard, against the possible consequences of them.

At any rate, all worthy men of every persuasion will have to lament Mr. *Burke's* indiscretion; because he will have contributed to disturb the general harmony which prevailed among the different classes of Christians; and that at a period which most loudly calls for unanimity. The members of his own congregation will have little cause to thank him. It is rumoured that an application has been made to the British Government for a licence for a Roman Catholic School. But Mr. *Burke's* publication is a complete answer to such a petition. No man in his senses can suppose that any sovereign could permit seminaries to be established, under the direction of persons who teach the *divine ministry of the people*. It is to be feared likewise that his Letter of Instruction will throw a great deal of discredit and suspicion upon the worthy part of the Roman Catholics who are very undeserving of it.

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From the great influence which the Clergy of that Church are supposed to possess over their members, it will be concluded that the jacobinical doctrines here displayed have pervaded the whole body; in which censure many excellent men, and good subjects will naturally, however unjustly, be comprehended; unless they effectually remove such unfounded prejudices against them, by the most decided and unambiguous conduct.

IF in the course of these observations I have been obliged to speak pretty plainly respecting Mr. *Burke's* publication; let it be remembered that I have been merely upon the *defensive*. My only object was to vindicate the legislature of Great Britain and of this country from a charge of calumny, protestantism from an imputation of imposture, and its ministers from a malignant accusation of being hirelings in the fold of Christ; that I have been resisting the principles of confusion, and upholding the lawful prerogatives of my sovereign.

Between Mr. *Burke's* political and his religious opinions a material distinction is to be made. The doctrines of Jacobinism are not connected with any particular religion, and it is the duty of every good member of society to detect, expose, and resist them, wherever they appear, since they are equally injurious to persons of all religions.

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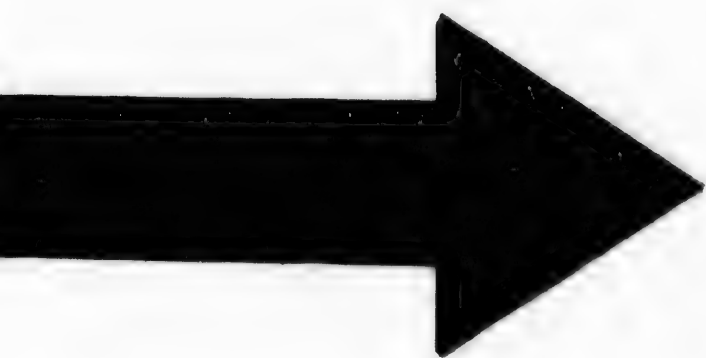
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But his religious opinions would not have induced me to trouble the public with these observations if he had restrained himself to his own Church, and kept within the bounds of decency, and the respect due even to the involuntary errors of others: if he had not declared open war, against every other persuasion, and treated all protestant ministers with the most scurrilous language. Following his arguments I have been under the necessity of discussing the exclusive claim of the Church of Rome to spiritual authority. Beyond this, I have carefully declined entering upon any of the Roman Catholic Tenets, further than Mr. *Burke* has voluntarily brought them forward to the notice of the public. I have not willingly or unnecessarily attacked any man's principles, or his prejudices; it was not my purpose to prove that they are in the wrong, but that we have good grounds to believe ourselves to be in the right; not to censure the Romish Church, but to shew that Protestant Ministers are not deserving of the very opprobrious epithets which have been lavished upon them.—Of misrepresenting the tenets of the Roman Catholics I cannot surely be accused since I have uniformly stated them in their own words, and from the most authentic sources; and I have alledged few facts without quoting my authorities.

However great the provocation, I have endeavoured to preserve the temper of a Christian and a Gentlemen. Against Mr. *Burke* himself





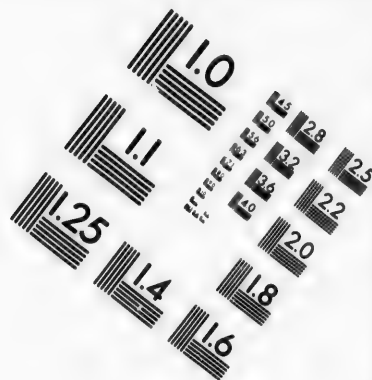
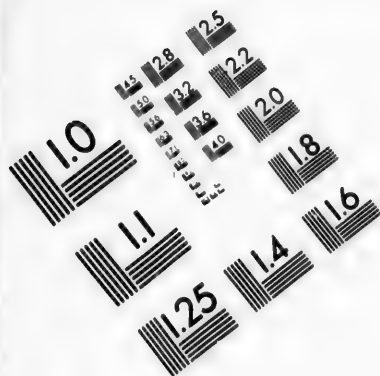
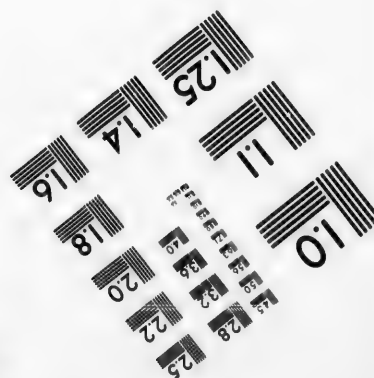
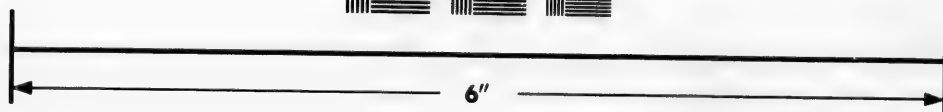
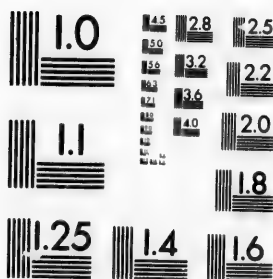


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himself I entertain neither resentment or ill will. I only pray that God may forgive and amend in him the unfriendly spirit which he has shewn in his publication. As to the Roman Catholics in general, however I may lament what I conceive to be errors, not from prejudice, but from serious inquiry, I condemn them not ; to their own master they stand or fall. As I have no reason to the contrary so I feel no sentiments towards them but those of a sincere brotherly love. As I have hitherto lived with them in habits of mutual civility and kindness, so I hope always to continue in the same reciprocal exchange of good offices. I know, and I wish them to recollect, that we are all the servants of the same God, having all the same hope in his son Jesus Christ. Upon other points we may differ, upon one subject there can be no variation of opinion, that *universal Charity* is the characteristic virtue of all Christians. " Though we have the " gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though we " have faith, so that we could remove mountains, and have not charity, we are nothing*." In the pursuit and exercise of *this virtue* emulation between all sects of Christians would be noble. Instead of hurling defiance and anathemas at each other, which can never convince the understanding, though they may inflame the passions, how much more edifying a spectacle would it be to see us striving in a

* 1 Cor. XIII.

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" long and is kind ; which envieth not, vaun-
" teth not itself, is not puffed up ; doth not be-
" have itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is
" not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil ; re-
" joiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the
" truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things,
" hopeth all things, endureth all things."

I now conclude my remarks, which have
extended to a much greater length than I pro-
posed. At the same time I take my farewell
of this subject ; controversy is my aversion,
and nothing but what I conceived to be the
loud calls of duty could have so long interrup-
ted occupations more agreeable to myself, if
not more useful to others. I leave the ques-
tions here considered as they now stand ; for
every man to form his private opinion upon
them, according to the measure of his own
knowledge and understanding. No fresh at-
tacks shall induce me to break this resolution.
My purpose will be answered if I shall have
contributed to confirm the faith of any one
protestant ; if I shall have been the means of
uniting Christians in the bonds of love, and of
animating all good subjects to rally round their
King, and the British Constitution both in
Church and State, under which they enjoy li-
berty, universal toleration, and happiness.

ROBERT STANSER.

Halifax, March 7th, 1804.

Omitted in page 12, after line 12.

Now, by another Canon of Pope *Urban II*, it is declared not to be murder to kill persons who have been excommunicated.

"We do not consider those as murderers, who burning with the zeal of their catholic mother against persons excommunicated, shall kill any of them."*

Taking the two canons together, it is clear, therefore, not only that heretical Sovereigns, but that all heretics whatever, by the catholic tenets, might have been lawfully destroyed or murdered.

* Decret. Causa XXIII, Quest. 47. Non eos homicidas arbitramur, quos adversus excommunicatos a catholica matris ardentes, aliquos eorum trucidasse contigerit.

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